English Writers of To-Day

Hall Caine



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To Harry Wilding

as a token of the author's regard.

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HALL CAINE

HIDDERLEY.—On the 27th February, 1921, at London Road, Alderley Edge, JOHN HIDDERLEY, aged 50 years. Service at Alderley Edge Parish Church on Wednesday, 2nd March, at two o'clock. Friends please accept this intimation.

HILTON.—On February 27, at Croft Lane, Hollins, Whitefield, JAMES HILTON, in his 80th year.

KENYON.—On February 26, suddenly, at Rickmansworth, HETTY (Milly Esther Innes), wife of Charles Frederick KENYON and daughter of the late Charles Alfred Luffman.

MARSON.—On the 26th ult., at 47, Shaw Road, Heaton [illegible] 80th year.

14



Elliott & Fry, Photographers, London.

With Kindest greetings

Hall Caine

HALL CAINE

The Man and the Novelist

BY

C. FRED KENYON.

London

GREENING & CO., LTD.

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1901

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PREFACE

IN preparing this monograph on Mr Hall Caine, I have devoted much more attention to his earlier life than to those years during which he has been before the public as a novelist. The reasons for this are obvious, the chief one being that the early life of a famous man, with its struggles against circumstance, and its slow, oft-impeded progress towards success, is of much more interest to the general reader than that part of his life which is passed immediately under the gaze of all interested in him.

I have to express my thanks to Miss Esther Luffman for considerable assistance in Chapters VII., VIII. and IX.; to Miss Brown, daughter of the Rev. T. E. Brown, for permission to use the letters printed on pages 115-17, 145-6, 182-3; to Miss Pinto Leite, the literary executrix of R. D. Blackmore, for permission to use the letters printed on pages 90-2, 94-7, 118-19; to Miss Harriett Jay, the literary executrix of Robert Buchanan, for permission to use the letter printed

on pages 79-80; and to Mr A. P. Watt, the literary executor of Wilkie Collins, for permission to use the letters printed on pages 108-10.

These letters, all of them addressed to Mr Hall Caine, are used with his consent.

I owe my thanks to two early friends of Mr Hall Caine, the Rev. Wm. Pierce and Mr George Rose, for the recollections of the boyhood of my subject which give so much freshness and vitality to my narrative.

In preparing this volume I have sometimes spoken out of my personal knowledge of my subject, and it may be that without intending it I have appeared to commit him to my own opinions. If this be so, let me hasten to say that whatever the value of what I have said, it is everywhere and entirely my own, and the last thing I desire is to charge my own views to my subject, especially where in any degree they concern himself.

After I had finished my work I wished to submit the manuscript to Mr Hall Caine for the verification of facts, and I hoped that perhaps he would give me the benefit of a short prefatory note saying that these were correctly stated. But Mr Hall Caine could not be induced to meet the latter part of my request, and to the former part he would only respond so far as the facts concerned

others than himself. I now feel that this decision was the only proper and possible one, but as paragraphs in literary papers have said that Mr Hall Caine has "revised" my biography of himself, I find myself reluctantly compelled to publish the following letter:—

"DEAR MR KENYON,—I have looked over the portion of your manuscript which you sent me, and have made a few comparatively unimportant changes. They concern what you say about my friends, living and dead, and therefore I have felt it to be my duty to set you right where I thought you were wrong. With what you say of myself, whether in the way of criticism or biography, I do not feel that I have any right to interfere, and I fear I must deny myself the pleasure of writing the Preface which you are good enough to request. If your view of my life and my books is to have any value for the public, it must stand as your own, without any criticism or endorsement from me.

"Perhaps I feel that much of a book of this intimate nature might be better deferred until the subject of it is gone, but I can only thank you for the goodwill with which you have done what you set out to do.—Yours very truly,

"HALL CAINE."

Therefore, in publishing this monograph on a living man who is much in the light of public opinion and still a subject for controversy, I wish to take every responsibility for whatever errors of judgment or taste may appear in my work. My sources of information, with the important exceptions indicated above, have been public ones, and the subject of my sketch has had nothing to do either with the origin of my book or the way in which it has been carried out.

C. FRED KENYON.

Ellesmere Park,
Eccles, *September* 24, 1901.

HALL CAINE

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

THE keynote of Hall Caine's character, both as a man and as a novelist, is sincerity, and the deepest thing in him is love of humanity. He is dominated by the ambition to get out of the realm of thought all that is best and wisest, and from his heart a stream of love for suffering, tortured humanity is constantly flowing. Heart and brain alike are ever at work for the good of mankind. "I have a real sense of joy in the thought that I am at least in the midst of the full stream of life, not in an eddy or backwater," he said to me one summer day, as we lay among the ferns of Greeba. He loves to feel that he is striving with the

complex forces of these impetuous days of a new century; loves to feel that he is being carried along by the River of Life, for ever battling with the torrent, and always stretching out eager hands to help those who are weaker than himself. This, I repeat, is the deepest thing in Hall Caine, both as a man and as a writer, and the critics who find other interpretations of either know both imperfectly.

Thus it comes about that the great body of his written work is full of a wonderful sympathy for his fellow-creatures. Every man's sorrow is *his* sorrow, and every man's joy *his* joy. At no time of his life has he been immersed in the study of dead-and-gone languages; he has always been occupied with the study of humanity—humanity in its multifarious activities, hopes, struggles and fears. He has gone to the root of all things—the souls and hearts of men and women. He is no psychological analyst of man's wickedness; rather does he overlook the weakness of man's nature in his admiration for all the

good he finds there. "No man is as black as he is painted," he has told me, not once, but often; and he does not say this because of any inability to perceive sin where it exists, but rather because his clear-sighted intellect detects all the hereditary influences, the hideous power of circumstance, and the temptation to which men are exposed. I can think of no English writer, past or present, who evinces so broad and generous a sympathy with all mankind, as does Hall Caine. His power of sympathy has enabled him to understand the characters of men with whom he has come in contact, no matter of what nationality they have been. Englishman, Icelander, Moor, Italian, German — all are read by him with sympathy and with ease, because he accepts the fact that the passions of love, hate, sorrow and joy are the same all the world over. In his works I do not find any subtle analyses of character; he treats all his men and women on broad human principles, concerning himself with the structural basis of their natures, and leaving

the details to take care of themselves. He has neither the analytical sense of George Moore, nor the extraordinary subtlety of George Meredith; neither the passionate pessimism of Thomas Hardy, nor the epigrammatic cynicism of John Oliver Hobbes. He is simple, earnest, human. He takes no heed of the tricks by means of which an unwholesome interest is aroused; but his strong dramatic sense takes the place of these, and enchains the reader's attention.

I am very far from saying that Hall Caine is without fault as an imaginative writer: he himself would be the first to deprecate such a statement. He has the defect of his qualities. He sees everything on a large scale, no matter how intrinsically insignificant it may be. So great is his absorption in and love for humanity that he has dulled his sense of perspective, and what seems to the average man an ordinary, everyday affair, is to him charged with tragic significance. The consequence is that he is always writing at white heat: it is a

real mental and emotional strain for anyone to read a novel of his. He expects almost as much from the reader as he gives him. Again, his view of life is often very one-sided; he sees all its tragedy, and little or nothing of its comedy. This is particularly noticeable in his earlier books. He takes himself seriously, as every artist should, but he sometimes forgets that in order to take oneself seriously it is not necessary to shut one's eyes to the light and laughter that are in the world. That Hall Caine has humour no one who has read *The Deemster*, *The Christian*, or *Cap'n Davy's Honeymoon* can doubt; but his humorous instincts are constantly kept in check, and subordinated to the tragic interest of the plot. There is nothing approaching "comic relief" in any of his works, and for this reason we may be grateful, for, structurally, his novels are almost perfect, and to have gone out of his way in order to introduce eccentric and humorous characters would have been to destroy the symmetry of his plots. No! it is his general outlook on life which

seems at fault : all is tragedy, as black and awe-inspiring as a thunder-cloud. The white brilliant day is to him never free from distant thunders; the sun is always shadowed by a cloud. To quarrel with this view of humanity would be useless, for it is the man himself, and his work is but an honest, sincere interpretation of his personality.

One of the chief qualities of his work is his dramatic sense. He uses it powerfully and, at times, with astounding effect. In his earlier novels (*The Shadow of a Crime* and *A Son of Hagar*) he does not employ it so skilfully as in, say, *The Deemster* and *The Bondman;* he is so mastered by it, and so much the slave of his own personality, that the written result is often melodrama pure and simple. Indeed, it is the opinion of many critics that Mr Caine was born a dramatist, and not a novelist, and the late Mr Blackmore used to insist that the success of the author of *The Manxman* would be as nothing compared with what awaited him as a dramatist. This opinion

has been endorsed by the American public, who were as enthusiastic over the dramatised version of *The Christian* as they were over the novel. But probably the dramatist in Hall Caine has never yet expressed itself. A dramatised version of a novel begins with obvious limitations.

Let me say something of Mr Caine's method of working. In many respects it resembles that of M. Zola. They are, above everything, conscientious. Mr Caine works slowly: three years elapsed between the publication of *The Manxman* and the publication of *The Christian;* and four between *The Christian* and *The Eternal City.* "For the writing of *The Eternal City,* I have read or looked into as many books as there are over there," said the novelist to me in his library, pointing to a bookcase containing several hundred volumes. He takes notes freely. His writing is a process of condensation. He verifies each statement of importance by personal reference to the original authorities. Nothing escapes his attention. He tries

to weld his various facts into one consistent whole, and the result is a closely-written logical piece of work. He seeks documentary evidence, not from one source only, but from all sources. It will be readily seen that such a method of work as this involves enormous care and patience: a single slip, and the critics are on him, shouting that a mere schoolboy could teach him better than that! For Hall Caine is a born fighter —a fighter against all the injustice and sham of modern society; and whatever he may attack, the critic is sure to imagine that it is his duty to take up the cudgels on behalf of him who is assailed. In such closely-written, fully-packed books as Hall Caine's, it would be an utter impossibility that there should be no technical mistake of any kind; and because a few of these crept into *The Christian*, some of the critics thought they were justified in declaring the whole book a mistake. On what they knew they based their judgment of what they did not know. It is the way of the world.

If one estimated the amount of work done by a writer by the number of words he wrote each day, then Mr Hall Caine could not be called a hard worker; for his daily output is small. Sometimes it is represented by a blank page. But ten hours spent in concentrated thought can be a far harder day's work than four or five foolscap sheets of writing. At the time of my last visit to Mr Caine, he was rising at 5 a.m., and working steadily till 10.30 a.m. That is to say, that when most men are beginning their day's labour, Mr Caine has finished his. He gives up the best of his life to his art. He finds that when the digestive organs are at work he does not work so well; so the early morning hours, both in summer and winter, find him with pen or book in hand. He prepares for each work just as a student prepares for a difficult examination. In *The Bondman* he was writing about Iceland; so he went to Iceland and studied at first hand what he was to describe. In *The Scapegoat*, Morocco; so he went to Morocco. In *The Eternal City*, Rome; so

he went to Rome. And so on, throughout all his books, and not in their broad features merely but in their every detail. I have seen the MS. copy of *The Bondman:* it is written in small, exquisitely neat handwriting, with many alterations and erasures. On my expressing amazement at the patience and care with which he worked, the novelist replied: "Oh! that is only the final copy. For each page you see there, perhaps three or four were written—the second better than the first, the third better than the second, and so on." No one but a writer can appreciate the amount of toil required for such a method of working as this; but Hall Caine sacrifices everything for the sake of his art. He feels the power of the written word, and the responsibility of giving to the world that which is not of one's best.

Apparently, before beginning work on a new novel, Mr Caine does not deliberately seek a plot. First of all, he becomes absorbed in some abstract idea — an idea that is the outcome of the times in which we live, and the conditions under which

we work. The idea lives in his brain for hours, days, weeks, months, and it may be years. From this idea his characters grow without any effort on his part. They spring into being out of the nebulous atmosphere in which they exist, and from his characters comes his plot. It is generally a matter of slow germination: the abstract idea—the seed of the novel—lies in his brain, gathering unto itself all the experience and thought of the novelist's life, and gradually it grows and expands until it has reached a state of cohesion and unity. This method of working is the method of nearly all creative minds; there are few who deliberately seize a plot, and create their characters to fit in with the exigencies of time, place and circumstance. A man's character it is that makes the plot, not *vice versa.* It must not be supposed from this that Hall Caine regards the plot as quite a secondary matter; but he works from within outwards, making the plot develop according to the manner in which the creatures of his brain act, feel and think. A cut-and-dried plot is very

often the mere mechanism of an agile mind; but there is a kind of plot which is inspired, which has for its centre of radiation a spiritual idea of truth and beauty. And this is the kind of plot with which Hall Caine has sympathy. Take *The Deemster*, for instance. What is it but a modern version of the Prodigal Son? The abstract idea of repentance and self-purification after a life of dissolute conduct. Again, *The Bondman* is the story of Esau and Jacob, with the sympathy of the reader being drawn to Esau. *The Scapegoat* is the story of Eli and his sons, a girl taking the place of Samuel; and *The Manxman* is a modern version of David and Uriah.

The root idea of each of these stories is not one that depends for its interest on any particular time or place; it is for all times and all places. The *mise-en-scène*, the atmosphere, the characters are but accidents —the necessary accidents for the presentment of the moral and spiritual drama. *The Christian* and *The Eternal City*, it is true, depend on their presentment for a great deal

of their interest: they are the outcome of the strenuous and conflicting times in which we live. But still, in these books also, the eternal spiritual questions are clearly indicated and clearly discernible. It seems to me Mr Caine believes that if a novelist or poet does not seek to elevate his fellow-creatures by his work, there can be no reason for his continuing to write. It cheers and strengthens the reader to have a noble character put before him, for he thinks to himself, "I could be like that if I tried;" and in many cases he does try, and the result achieved is the greatest reward a writer can receive. The hero must not be too good; he must be human, faulty maybe; but still pure and noble. Otherwise, the reader says, "Such a character never existed. He is utterly beyond me. Try how I might I could never be like that." No! a noble nature is rarely without sin, and it is the small faults of disposition, temperament and character which make him real and human. In this connection I think of the noble-hearted Dan of *The Deemster*, that tortured

soul who, though a forger and a murderer, yet remains one of the purest and most lovable characters in modern fiction.

Before closing this introductory chapter, I should like to say something of Mr Caine as he impresses one in conversation. It has been my privilege to have met him several times, and I have spent many unforgettable hours in his company alone. First of all, he is one of the very few men I have met who impressed me, almost at the first glance, with the conviction that he had genius. As soon as he speaks his face lights up, his eyes shine, and his soul is laid bare. That is no manner of speaking: it is the simple truth. One knows that whatever he may say it is exactly what he feels. There is no "smartness" in his conversation, no epigrammatic fireworks, no talking for mere cleverness' sake. He speaks convincingly because what he says he believes to be the truth. His delivery is dramatic and realistic. He rarely gesticulates, but when he does it is with the discrimination of the born actor; one feels, indeed, that the stage

has lost a man who would surely have become one of its most notable figures. His knowledge of men and things is both deep and wide. Nothing escapes his observation. He has travelled in many countries — America, Russia, Poland, Iceland, Italy and Morocco, and wherever he has been he has studied, first of all, humanity, and secondly, humanity, and yet again humanity. And so, throughout the busy years of his life, when he was engaged in journalism, study, novel-writing, travelling, lecturing, he was all the time adding to his knowledge of his fellow-creatures, quietly observing not only the great men of the earth with whom he came in contact, but also the boy who brought the newspaper in the morning, the fishermen at their nets, and the hundred-and-one seemingly commonplace people whom one meets in the street day by day. Still, with all this knowledge of humanity he is never eager to express opinions on notable men and women. He is silent concerning those he dislikes for fear lest he has misjudged them; he will not speak of his friends

because he sets so high a value on their friendship. But on all the problems that have come under his immediate notice, he is willing—nay, anxious—to hear the opinion of other people, no matter if their knowledge be merely superficial.

Mr Caine is of average height, well-made and erect. His brow is fine and broad, his eyes large and luminous. His head is the head of a poet, a thinker, a prophet. It is suggestive of most of the portraits—ideal and otherwise—of Shakespeare; there is the same noble forehead, and the same large, passionate eyes. In manner he is quiet and, except among friends, somewhat reserved; but when his interest is aroused he asserts himself at once, speaking passionately and with consummate fluency. He is, perhaps, one of the best *raconteurs* living, and has a vast store of personal anecdote with which to illustrate any point which may crop up in conversation. He has a particularly keen sense of the humorous, and his manner of relating a funny story is equal to that of his fellow-countryman, the late Thomas Edward Brown.

His home life is simple and unaffected; it is a life of plain living and high thinking. He is the friend of every cottager round about Greeba, and the fishermen of Peel are his comrades. I remember an old woman from Crosby talking of him to me three or four years ago. "Terrible kind he is," she said, "and simple. Aw, but you should have seen him makin' hay on the curragh—laughin' and jokin' and all that." And whatever sentence she began, it always ended with the same words, "terrible kind he is."

CHAPTER II

HALL CAINE'S CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH

THOMAS HENRY HALL CAINE was born in Runcorn, Lancashire, on May 14, 1853. Runcorn is by no means a romantic town, and, fortunately for the future novelist, he only spent ten days of his life within its precincts. His father was a Manxman, and his mother a native of Cumberland. They were both of the people—hard-working, poor and thrifty; but they must have possessed some remarkable qualities of mind and heart if we are to give any credence to the theory of heredity, for not only has Hall Caine made his mark upon his generation, but his sister, Miss Lily Hall Caine, has won a by no means unimportant place in the theatrical world, and his brother, Mr Ralph Hall Caine, is, within limits, a charm-

ing writer of talent and ability. Caine is a Celtic name; Hall, his mother's maiden name, is Norse, and is very commonly met with still in Iceland. The novelist himself has inherited the physical characteristics of his maternal ancestors, for, like the Norsemen, his beard and hair are red, and although he is the reverse of a strong man, his clearly-defined and well-developed features indicate to some extent the physical robustness of the Norsemen. His forefathers were farmers and fishermen, an old hardy family of great strength and physical endurance.

Though born in Runcorn, and resident whilst a very young child in Liverpool, Hall Caine's earliest recollections are of the Isle of Man, of his grandmother's cottage "Ballavolley," Ballaugh, in the north of Manxland. It speaks much for his early development that even as a little child he loved the island which, in future years, was to be dearer to him than any spot on earth. "There is no place in America, Italy, Russia, Iceland, Morocco,

or any other country I have visited, that is quite so beautiful as my own little island in its own little way," he said to me only a month or two ago. And what he thinks to-day he has always thought.

There is a subtle, elusive charm about the Isle of Man which is obvious to the least observant of men, but there are few who are able to define its particular character, or who are able to define from what source it is derived. Once become a lover of that narrow stretch of land, and you are eternally lost; its beauty, its freshness and its fragrance will haunt you for ever, and each year when June comes round you will be impelled, by an irresistible desire, to tread once more the heights of Snaefell and Barrule, and wander again through the glens of Sulby and the Dhoon. It were worse than useless for me to attempt to paint any of the beautiful scenes which Manxland possesses, but the explanation of its distinctive charm lies in this, that it is an island. For not only is it an island, but a nation—a nation with manners and

customs peculiar to itself — a nation that is, for the most part, occupied with itself and its own affairs. Its very aloofness attracts. It is in the world, but not of it; it lies apart surrounded by the ever-changing seas, and covered by a firmament which seems to be a part of its very self. The dim outline of the hills of other lands — England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales—only emphasises this sense of remoteness. It is only the vessels out at sea creeping steadily along the horizon, that act as a reminder of the existence of other lands, and not the far-off lands themselves. These vessels are the only disturbing influence of the island's peace: they breathe forth the breath of the city, and remind one of that which one has been tempted almost to forget—that the world is not all beautiful, and that sooner or later the city will again claim us as its own.

But this island-charm was not the only influence that was at work upon the young child's imagination. His grandmother, superstitious like all good Manx people,

would tell him tales in the dusk of evening, that banished all sleep from his eyes, and set his fancy weaving stories of elves, fairies, gnomes and witches. The old woman had the folk-lore of her native country at her finger-ends, and so attentive a listener curled up at the fire of peat made a good story-teller of her. The first book he remembers reading was a huge volume on the German Reformation, about Luther and Melancthon, and other men who soon became his well-loved heroes. These days Mr Caine remembers well and the memory is sweet and pleasant. But the time came when it was necessary for him to go to school, and he returned to his parents who had settled in Liverpool. At the age of ten he entered as a "new boy" the public school in Hope Street, Liverpool. Among his fellow-pupils was a William Pierce who was afterwards to become one of the most prominent figures in the Congregational Ministry. I am indebted to this gentleman for the following schoolboy reminiscences of his companion.

"Many things served to make the entry of Hall Caine among us noteworthy. In the first place, he was easily distinguished among a crowd of schoolboys by his then bright hair—gold, turning to red—his clear, almost girlish complexion, and his large, luminous brown eyes. I think the almost instantaneous conviction in the minds of the rest of the class that morning was that our new friend would be all the better for a little wholesome persecution when their duties were over, if only to take some of the painful freshness out of him and tone him down to our own colour. This feeling on our part was heightened when he was called upon to read a passage aloud, which he did, as I clearly recall, in a very musical voice, and with much greater modulation than we had dared to employ—lest we should be thought to be giving ourselves airs! When our master was injudicious enough to praise Hall Caine warmly at the expense of the rest of us, the duty of taking him in hand became one of high moral obligation.

And though I have no recollection of what happened, I have no doubt that, being so different from other boys in many respects, he did suffer some little persecution, without being, I hope, any the worse for the discipline.

"I think that probably, to the end of his school experience, Caine was somewhat scoffed at by the rougher boys; partly, also, because he was not addicted to settling his differences with other boys by giving or accepting challenges to fight. But he was not in the least a milksop. Among the trivial remembrances of those days, the only outstanding recollection I have of Caine is quite characteristic of him. At one of the terminal examinations we were set to write a short English composition. The report of the examiner stated that one paper was unusual, coming from a class of boys of our years. This youthful production was graced by apt poetical quotations, illustrations of the theme set us—a unique feature in the examiner's experience of boys of our standard.

I remember one of our class-mates remarking that it required some cheek to quote poetry in old ——'s composition; but my own estimate of Caine increased by this and similar circumstances, and when I left for one of the larger grammar schools in the city, we were already great friends."

It will be seen from the above that early in life Hall Caine was schooled to bear the unfriendly criticism and persecution of those who were unable to understand him. The schoolmaster mentioned by the Reverend William Pierce was Mr George Gill, the head of the well-known firm of publishers of schoolbooks. From the very first Mr Gill recognised that his young, sensitive pupil had remarkable powers, and that if all went well he would one day make a name for himself. In proof of this I should like to relate a story in connection with the first night of *The Christian* in London. Mr George Gill, now an old man, was in the stalls, his heart full of pride at the distinguished position his quondam pupil had gained.

The theatre was packed with a fashionable and intellectual audience. A play was about to be produced which had taken America by storm, and it was confidently expected that in England also the drama would achieve a tremendous success. Carried away by generous pride and enthusiasm, Mr Gill turned to those seated near him, exclaiming: "I always knew it! I *always* knew it! I said from the very first that the lad had genius, and to-night I am witnessing the proof of it." The conduct of the old gentleman reflected the greatest credit on his heart and head alike, and it is a noteworthy instance of Hall Caine's power of making and keeping friends.

But let me return to Mr Pierce's reminiscences. "During the few years that followed," he says, "my friendship with Caine met with little advance. I saw him occasionally only, and heard of his doings but at rare intervals. His people were attached to the large and important Baptist Church in Myrtle Street, presided over by Hugh Stowell Brown, himself a Manxman.

It was natural that young Caine should find here an opening for his budding faculties, though he never became one of the inner circle of the workers of the church. I used to hear of his occasional participation in the proceedings of a literary and debating society established at Myrtle Street. Without aiming at it, he easily drew attention to himself — in voice, in manner and in mental cast he was an exceptional youth. Meanwhile he was 'something in the city.'"

Mr George Rose, another of his most intimate friends at this time, writes me that at the age of fifteen young Caine was apprenticed to an architect. "It was in a quiet spot," continues Mr Rose, "somewhat remote from the part of the town where the activities of commerce were carried on. The daily routine of duties was not burdensome, and many of his hours were devoted to the self-imposed tasks of a literary nature, in which he delighted. Probably he dreamed, through many a quiet hour, of success to be gained in after years; if it were possible to

recall some of those dreams and, by putting them together, to form the chart of a projected journey through life, it would be found to differ widely in many ways from the course he was ordained to follow. Perhaps the only points of coincidence which could be noticed would be the constant turning towards the Isle of Man that was never absent from any scheme of life upon which his fancy dwelt in youthful days.

"For those who hope to 'make their way,' London necessarily fills a large space in the map of life, and thither Hall Caine's thoughts often turned. Then there were quiet joys in Lakeland to tempt the wanderer; but the little Man Island was the home to which return was to be made at last, and which was to have its scenes brightened by any glory that could be won in the outer world.

"Hall Caine was endowed by Nature with some graceful qualities which would have made him popular in whatever walk of life he chose to follow. Before it was known outside the circle of his friends that he

possessed such remarkable qualities of mind he had already shown his power to hold the attention of audiences, and was well known and greatly esteemed in the wide district occupied by the southern portion of Liverpool. It was customary at that time to arrange 'Readings' for the amusement of the people. These entertainments were given by societies connected with places of worship, and were intended to have an educating and refining effect on the people who attended them. Hall Caine when very young was in great request at gatherings of that kind, and his presence on any platform was enthusiastically welcomed. He was of pleasing appearance, confident in his manner, and his countenance gave the impression that his disposition was genial. People were always happy to make his acquaintance, and when he began to speak, whether expressing his own thoughts or reciting some piece of poetry, the clear tone of his voice, the perfect enunciation of his words, his intense earnestness and effective dramatic style enabled him to hold the

attention of an audience from his first word so long as he chose to address them. His taste lay in the selection of serious pieces; sometimes they were even a little beyond the comprehension of his hearers. He had given much attention to the study of the works of the Lake school of poets, and to those of the best writers of the eighteenth century. With these as models, he had formed for himself an ideal of perfection in language that, even in the excitement of speaking in public, he never lost sight of; and this, combined with his natural fluency of speech, raised his efforts to the level of oratory. The extent and variety of his reading tended to give a peculiar quaintness to some of his forms of expression. He sometimes introduced words and phrases borrowed from old authors, forgetting that they were no longer in common use. At other times the sense in which he used a word was different from that in which his hearers understood it. In connection with his work in the society of Myrtle Street Chapel he undertook to read a poem upon which he was then engaged; it

was a romantic composition in blank verse. The subject was the return of a hero to his desolated native land, in defence of which he had been long absent on a distant journey. Although the poem was of considerable length it contained few characters and incidents, but its lines embodied Hall Caine's ideal of a golden age. When he first turned his thoughts to literature as a profession his inclination would have led him to express his ideas in the form of poetry ; in this particular his mind gradually changed. Next to poetry his desire was to become a journalist. During his holiday visits to the Isle of Man he found opportunities of contributing to the island newspapers, and soon his articles were so highly valued that his editor accepted everything that came from his pen. One little peculiarity in those articles was the source of much amusement to his friends in Liverpool. It was the frequent repetition of a pet phrase, 'these three small islands,' by which he meant Great Britain, Ireland and the Isle of Man. If he had then been called upon to name them in the order of their importance

he would undoubtedly have given the first place to Manxland."

In connection with these articles mentioned by Mr Rose, I may say that they were written when their author was sixteen years of age. It has been my privilege to read many of them. They are noticeable for close reasoning and exceptionally wide reading for one so young. They were written in favour of the maintenance of Manx political institutions which, at that time, were threatened with annihilation. They are vehement but reasonable, and in no place does their author overstep the bounds of common-sense.

Again I quote Mr Rose. "One of Hall Caine's favourite plans was an intention to write a drama. He had read that in some part of Germany there was a law by virtue of which an inquiry was made immediately after a man's death into the extent of his possessions; and when it was found that he had evaded payment of any portion of the taxes to which a man of his means was liable, the whole of his property

was forfeited to the State. The plot of Hall Caine's intended drama was to be founded upon a tragic result of this custom. The principal idea of the story was that a wealthy merchant having entrusted to his confidential agent the duty of making the statements required by the law, the agent systematically falsified them, in order that on the death of the principal the agent might become an informer and bring about the forfeiture of the estate. The motive was that the daughter of the merchant, being rendered penniless, might be driven to accept the informer's proposal of marriage.

"Such was the crude outline of the plot; but it was altered almost every day. He often talked about this project, but never spoke about the words of the play. It was the machinery of the play that he was concerned about, the number of the scenes and their order of succession, with other points of stage management. He wrote so easily that he felt no anxiety about his ability to accomplish the literary part of the design; but he believed that in a dramatic com-

position, however original and lofty the thoughts it contained, however perfect the expression of them, all would be wasted unless they were woven around a framework of method exactly adapted to meet the conditions of stage representation.

"Although the idea of writing such a play was never carried into effect, it served to show what direction Hall Caine's thoughts were taking. Many of his contributions to Liverpool newspapers took the form of dramatic criticism. His mind was greatly influenced by the successes achieved by Henry Irving. It will be remembered that for some considerable time before Mr Irving appeared in the character of Hamlet, his intention to do so was known, and the degree in which his representation of the part would differ from that of other actors was the subject of lively discussion. Hall Caine interested himself deeply in the matter, and contributed many brilliant articles on the subject to various papers. He gave a great deal of attention to the study of Shakespeare's writings, and his

conversation on the subject was very interesting because of the light he was able to throw on the meaning of passages the importance of which would be overlooked by an ordinary reader. I heard him speak at a meeting of a literary society over which he presided for some time and which had enrolled many able men amongst its members. The subject was a reading of scenes from Shakespeare's *Julius Cæsar*. Some remarks had been made about the conversation of the conspirators which takes place as they stand in the garden of Brutus's house. In talking together they allude to the dawn which they saw or pretended to see. Hall Caine insisted that the words were full of hidden meaning if properly emphasised by appropriate gesture. He quoted the speech of Casca in Act II., Scene 1. 'Here as I point my sword, the sun arises; . . . some two months hence, up higher towards the north, he first presents his fire,' and said it was necessary for the actor to bring out the true significance of the lines by pointing with his sword,

first to the house of Cæsar, and then to that of Brutus, indicating the transfer of power to the latter which the conspirator desired to effect."

This study of Shakespeare—a study close, intimate and unremitting — cannot be insisted on too strongly. Shakespeare and the Bible have from his earliest years been his chief mental food: his thoughts are coloured by the imagery of the Prophets, and his language has gained in terseness, vigour and force from the greatest poet who has ever lived.

I now resume Mr Pierce's reminiscences. "He was becoming" (in about the year 1870, when Hall Caine was seventeen years of age) "more and more absorbed in literary studies, and quite early began to make acquaintance with the dramatists—not content, as most of us were, with reading the plays of Shakespeare only among the Elizabethans, but reading extensively and thoughtfully the writings of all the most notable playwrights of that great age. I was early struck by his references to the

Jew of Malta. He would quote Ben Jonson's *Volpone*, or from a play by Massinger, or Beaumont and Fletcher, or Webster, in a way which showed considerable familiarity with the literature of the time. These facts have more significance for me now than then, as I see in them the growth of his mind, and the evidence of an original impulse towards literary studies. It is difficult to explain how this solitary youth, amidst surroundings by no means suggestive of such studies, should have chosen this way of spending his hours of leisure; and by what instinct, in those early days when university extension lectures were yet unknown, before English literature as an educational subject was popularised, and before the publication of our modern guides and manuals for the help of the blundering tyro, Caine seized at once the salient points of the great subject, divining the place and importance of names not known to the merely well-informed multitude, least of all to youths who had not long left school.

"It was during this period that I began to renew my intimacy with Caine. It was probably due to some kindness on his part. He has a genius for friendship, and is capable of taking immeasurable pains in the service of those to whom he is attached; and he is, or perhaps I should say he was, one of the best and most faithful letter-writers I have ever known. I had left business and was studying Art and Literature in an easy, unmethodical, Bohemian fashion, drawing from the antique during the day, and exploring the poets and essayists in the evening, with desultory violin studies and excursions into Geology and *Genesis* by way of diversion and variety. Caine was interested in all these things; but he never aspired to sing or play, and made fun of his own drawings, though I believe he was really a skilful architectural draughtsman. He did one thing, one thing only, and he did it better than anyone else.

"Perhaps my knowledge of his mind during these early years is due to the fact that I left Liverpool about the close of 1871

for Carnarvon to take up a press appointment. Caine had no difficulty in communicating his thoughts in writing. I must have written him some account of my whereabouts, or have sent him copies of the newspaper on which I was engaged, or probably have done both things. And so a correspondence, to me most notable, began. Caine was principally responsible for its maintenance; he was the more regular and conscientious writer. His letters were often extraordinary with regard to their length, and more often extraordinary with regard to their contents. But in the most rapid and familiar of them there is a sense of style. He is full of qualifying clauses, inversions, interpolated interrogations, and exclamations, but the grammatical and logical close of each sentence is successfully reached. Still, though often somewhat formidable in length, and graced by literary ingenuities at times, they are letters, nevertheless, and not essays. There is no consciousness that a word in any one of them is ever to be seen by a third person. That they are less casual and

simple in style than most letters addressed to familiar friends must be set down to the character of the writer. I remember a somewhat matter-of-fact schoolfellow, himself innocent enough of any refinement of speech or culture of mind, expressing his detestation of Caine because when you met him on the most ordinary occasions and conversed on the most trifling subjects, 'he always spoke like a book.' However, it was natural to Caine to dress his casual thoughts in refined and graceful language. His thoughts are grave and gay in his letters, and sometimes, indeed, he writes for the sake of writing; he likes playing with words and sentences. He is naturally communicative—tells his thoughts, and gossips about himself pleasantly. He has been gracing a friend's essay on 'War' with a couple of stanzas. Not that he is a peace-at-any-price man; the stanzas, though not at all sanguinary, are highly patriotic. He has even delivered a Temperance lecture, and not without much appreciation on the part of the ancients who heard him; but he

positively declines to pursue Fame on the Temperance platform. Then after a little pleasantry he hopes I am laughing, as he himself does at his own jokes; in the first place, for reasons of prudence—since none other might laugh save himself, and in the second place, because it is unchristianlike to ask another to do what you refuse to do yourself. One item startles us. He has just finished a play in blank verse, and inquires if I should like to peruse it.

"In another letter he hopes the correspondence will continue, since he knows it would tend 'towards the establishment in our minds of fixed principles, upon matters the most important to man's welfare here, as well as in that existence of his which (we believe) is to come.' It would also strengthen our friendship, though upon the subject generally he has some sad things to say—as that at the time he is writing there lived not the man with whom he had 'true unity of feeling.' As the letter proceeds we see that he is entering the melancholy period of life when sad and

depressed spirits are a very frequent distemper with young men who are thoughtful and live much alone. In such a mood Caine had the day before written verses some of which he quotes, and a few lines of which I further quote.

> "'What wonder, if in height of grief
> The fading flower, the falling leaf
> Make truer solace to the mind,
> Than Nature's richest, gladdest bloom
> In harvest waving to the wind.
>
> "'What wonder if it grant relief
> To hearts o'erta'en, o'erdone by grief,
> To see the sun and sky unblest
> Put on a dark and murky vest!
> To see the moon in shadows pale
> Fade out before the coming gale!'

"It is a not uncommon mood with young men, and its not unnatural cure is for the young man to fall deeply in love. But there seemed no likelihood of any such happiness befalling young Caine, so far as any of his friends knew. He seemed to avoid the possibility of such a contingency. His friendships, so far as I knew, were exclusively with young men, though there

was nothing of the misogynist in him. In the letter from which the above quotations are taken, he again refers to grave spiritual questions — what is life? he asks, and naturally gives vague answers and speculations. He quotes, in connection with the hypothesis that evil is a quality of our more material part, the lines:—

> " 'I am the wave of life
> Stained with my margin's dust.'

He excuses himself for not sending the play in blank verse as he has only one draft copy, and its condition is such that he is convinced I could not read it. In some letters now lost he had referred to a Christmas poem he is to write, but although now it is the first day of December, it is not begun. 'It is to be framed from an old plot of one of the Greek Tragedians,' and is to be 'written in the same vein as Christabel.' At the close of this letter he mentions that if I cared to see newspaper articles of general interest written by him, I could have them in volumes.

"A later letter is written in rhymed couplets. After some four hundred lines in verse, it finishes with a few lines in prose. The poem referred to in previous letters is to be called *Geraldine*, but cannot be sent as 'a bookseller fellow needs to see it.' He had hoped to raise the character of this rhymed effusion by adding some verses on the Days of Minstrelsy, but after keeping it six days he must dispatch it without. He is to deliver a lecture on *Hamlet* the following month, and the subject is absorbing all his thoughts.

"Soon after this—about the close of 1873 or the beginning of the following year—I was interested to find Caine was proposing to publish a small monthly magazine, and he was good enough to ask me for a contribution. There were, evidently, difficulties in the way of the venture, small as it was. But he put all his usual energy into the enterprise and communicated his enthusiasm to his friends, and in due course the first number of *Stray Leaves* appeared, with a lithographic portrait of Henry Irving

as a frontispiece. It had some modest literary pretensions, though of no very distinctive character, and therefore after prolonged expectation it was not quite surprising to read: '*Stray Leaves* has made no second appearance. It never will.' But, meanwhile, he has another and larger magazine in hand, and this time, with a view of avoiding some of the difficulties which had beset him on his earlier venture, in announcing *The Rambler Magazine* he prints on the official paper 'T. H. H. Caine, Proprietor.' I was obliged to take an interest in the new magazine—Caine was so buoyantly sanguine of its success. I therefore sent him a poem, and next, and more to the purpose, arranged with a local bookseller to exhibit the poster and sell copies. I also got a favourable review of the first number inserted in the newspaper with which I was connected; and this ought to sell 'at least three dozen copies,' he writes. The parcel for our town got unaccountably delayed, but every copy was eventually distributed. Caine had

been staying at or near Keswick, and writes his astonishment that the poet Close (a well-known character in those parts) had sold two hundred copies, and was asking for a further hundred. But the letter containing this information has a much more exciting piece of news. He had to-day replied to an inquiry from 'a man of means (heaps of money)' concerning 'the establishment of a critical newspaper in Liverpool.' He is willing to conduct such a journal for three months if a sufficient guarantee fund is provided, and already seeing the possible success of this fresh candidate for Fame, says, if the project advances, I must return to Liverpool to take a place on his staff.

"There was being published in Liverpool at this time a small weekly journal called *The Town Crier*, satirising and criticising with more or less good humour the affairs of the town. It is not necessary to enter upon any details as to the establishment of this paper, but I was interested in its existence because Caine had some sort of con-

nection with it. The editor and general factotum was our old schoolfellow William Tirebuck, while Caine wrote for it, especially dramatic notices and reviews, and acted as adviser generally, if I remember rightly. We were all surely young enough to be engaged in such work, but Tirebuck was our junior by a couple of years. I remember visiting Liverpool about this time and calling at the small editorial sanctum out of South Castle Street. I had already written a little for *The Town Crier*, and was much interested in its career. It was a great time. Everybody was busy preparing for the next day's issue. The printer's boy had brought a bundle of galley proofs and was told he must not return without the rest of the copy. There were confidential conferences over correspondence, some of it purporting to divulge certain pieces of municipal jobbery; final consideration of the article which sailed very near the wind in denouncing a town scandal, in which a man of much wealth and no principle was concerned. Everyone was in the highest spirits. Caine had come

down in his dinner hour, or had special leave, and when we had settled the affairs of *The Town Crier* and of the town generally, we went off to a meal, not at all of an elaborate character, I admit, but graced by overflowing good-fellowship and light-hearted wit.

"Meanwhile, the fortunes of *The Rambler*, notwithstanding that all the copies of the first number were distributed and in some cases further copies called for, were not in a flourishing way. The printer's bill was a very matter-of-fact document. No amount of generous self-denying enthusiasm could alter its figures. Even reviews favourable and unfavourable, and there was a liberal number of both kinds, did not solve the problem. Caine rightly claimed that the widespread notice taken of *The Rambler* was some proof of its worth. One journal gave prominent place to the opinion that 'the contents of *The Rambler* are bosh—pure, unmitigated bosh,' the style of the criticism at least indicating the character of the journal. But the 'bosh' was not so

unmitigated that it could be disregarded. Nevertheless, the financial results were not encouraging. He tried, in answer to a sympathetic inquiry on my part, to let me know how matters stood. He says, 'The last issue paid (cannot pay more than) (or, rather, didn't *pay* at all, or paid on the wrong side) fifty per cent.' Then feeling that this was not exactly an enlightening statement, he proceeds—'I am really such a fool at business affairs and so very little acquainted with the technicalities of trade as surely to have made a mess of the last explanation.' The substance of the explanation was that they had reckoned on a loss, and had received half of what they had calculated their proceeds might be, making the real loss proportionately greater. He does not contemplate giving up; is 'only disposed to *delay* the issue of No. 2 in the hope of balancing affairs.' However, he never troubled any of his friends about the financial difficulties; whatever the losses may have been, he squared them without the aid of his fellow-contributors. The second

number did appear, somewhat belated, but that was the end of Caine's amateur efforts at floating a magazine.

"When I returned to Liverpool in the beginning of 1875, to prepare myself for college, I had an opportunity of renewing my personal intercourse with Caine. It was a very pleasant time to me. We had one or two congenial friends and with them or ourselves alone had a long succession of talks upon the subjects that interested us. I think he generally determined the course of our conversation. Earlier in life he had been greatly under the sway of Coleridge. By this time his tastes had widened and were more varied. He had much to say about Wordsworth. I recall an evening when he was full of the *Ode to Immortality*, which he quoted at great length—as he could most things he admired—and discussed with great insight and power. But the range of subjects we ventured upon was wide and varied enough to suit all tastes and dispositions. I can by no means recall them all, but I remember such subjects as the

writings of Jean Paul, the Aristotelian unities and the modern drama, the nature of Hamlet's madness, and Shakespearian subjects generally. Curiously enough, we had little to say concerning Tennyson — *In Memoriam* was the only poem I remember discussing — and even less in regard to Browning, though I had myself a vague conviction that Browning was the greater poet of the two. But we frequently conversed about Rossetti, Swinburne and William Morris. On many evenings when we felt little inclined for literary talks we enjoyed lighter chat and gossip; while, occasionally, we turned to graver subjects and speculated on eternal things with the calmness and confidence which are part of youth's prerogative. And though we were a kind of peripatetic academy, we were happy enough, and seasoned our more serious mental fare with a liberal share of laughter and fun.

"Apart from the little circle of friends with whom he thus associated—and I recall him most easily during the midsummer

months when I spent most of my long vacation at home—I think he spent a solitary life. He was little understood. The majority of the people he met being very dull persons, they could note only his outward peculiarities, and I have no doubt most of them set him down as an eccentric young man. They were struck with his musical voice, his copious diction, his literary style of speech, which I think they generally set down as an affectation. Yet he could, when he chose, make himself interesting to very commonplace people. He knew so many things. He found *them* interesting in ways they themselves little suspected. Then beside being a remarkable talker he was never disposed to turn the conversation into a monologue. He was a most sympathetic listener.

"For the sake of his health he often spent his week-ends at New Brighton, at the mouth of the Mersey, and for some time had permanent lodgings there. We were all compelled to visit him, for he was ever the most hospitable of friends, and thought

no trouble too great to bestow on the comfort of those who were his guests. I was his guest overnight, and specially recall his appearance at that time. He had grown as tall as he is now, and was of spare habit. He wore his hair, which had lost its early golden tinge, slightly longer than is usual. He had a striking face — pale and clean-shaven, a refined expression, ample forehead, and large, bright, intelligent eyes. For a student he walked very erect, wore a close-fitting and fairly long frock-coat, many buttoned and double-breasted, and was very square-shouldered. He was a man easily distinguished in a crowd.

"In my early days at college I had one special letter from Caine, and with some reference to it my own particular reminiscences of my eminent friend may come to a close. His younger brother John, a very fine young fellow, was at the time dangerously ill. Very soon after he died of consumptive disease. Hall Caine was subject to fits of depression, and this event did not tend to relieve his thoughts. Yet I think

the sad event left him with more hope and fortitude. Trial and difficulty always aroused the best in him. His letter, however, is very pathetic and interesting. I gather that I must have written, in reply to an earlier letter, that the stronger the natural affection, the greater the tendency to magnify the danger. He replies that it would not be easy to exaggerate the gravity of his brother's case, though they are not without hope that rest and nourishing food may do something to alleviate the lung disease. The letter is full of frank disclosures of his thought and feeling. He is preparing himself 'for the utmost length and disaster.' But his sad philosophy can only say: 'The best that can leave us is Life; the worst that can come is Death; of which we may remember that if it be now, it is not to come; if it be not to come, then it is now —the readiness is all.' My interpretation of his gloomy outlook as being not reality but the creation of his own thought, he examines and analyses, yet without comfort to himself. He feels how small is our power to choose

our own thoughts, 'how entirely men are *born* to convictions.' He moralises over a photograph of myself which I had sent him, and sees all my future in my face. And so with himself. It is not because he has *chosen* to think it so, that to him—

> "'The world is wild, and rough, and steep, and ribbed,
> And circle-bound with shades of misery.'

At the same time he declines Jean Paul's advice to treat it all like a dream. When we awake the dream-sorrow vanishes. 'I tremble when I reflect upon the horrible sceptic I should become, say rather the demon I should be, if believing in a Godhead I should believe also the world to be but a dream.' The sight of the young life leaving behind all the happy activities of existence here, and entering upon a succession of weary days 'doomed to peer through the darkness for the light of the fairer morning' touches him acutely; but it leads him to say that for his own part he means to face life bravely. Once, indeed, in a time of spiritual prostration 'Actual Death' seemed

'less terrible than its shadow,' but 'I have grown out of the weakness of that period, and now intend, not proudly, but resolutely, to meet life and go through with it.' And he has doubtless kept to the resolution, and through it achieved his present position."

It will be seen from the foregoing that whilst in Liverpool Hall Caine's life was an exceedingly busy one. With characteristic energy he threw himself heart and soul into any work he undertook, and already a burning ambition was urging him on to strain every nerve to gain his goal. His mind developed quickly: long nights of study and deep thought, some struggles of a material kind, and at least one tragic event made a man of him long before his time. Not that he was ever anything of a recluse: he was merely absorbed in his work, and the thoughts of the great minds which he studied matured his judgment, and he crammed a lifetime of experience into a few years. His connection with Rossetti was to ripen many qualities of his mind, and strengthen his character.

The following letters of Ruskin were addressed to Caine a year or two before the future novelist left Liverpool, and when he was in the midst of the office, journalistic and lecturing work described by Mr Pierce and Mr Rose. The first is dated November 8, 1878, and was written in reply to an invitation of Mr Caine to deliver an address in Liverpool.

"My Dear Sir,—I have, of course, the deepest interest in your work—and *for that reason* must keep wholly out of it.

"I should drive myself mad again in a week if I thought of such things.—I am doing botany and geology —and you, who are able for it, must fight with rogues and fools. I will be no more plagued by them.—Ever truly yours, J. Ruskin.

"I wrote first page on reading your printed report before reading your letter.

"My Dear Sir,—I am entirely hopeless of any good whatever against these devilish modern powers and passions—my words choke me if I try to speak.

"I know nothing of Liverpool—and what can I say there—but that it has first to look after its poor—and the churches will take care of themselves.

"Ever truly yours."

The second letter, dated 27th December 1879, reads :—

"My Dear Sir,—A bad fit of weariness,—not to say worse—kept me from fulfilling my promise. The paper you were good enough to send me is safe, but I fear left at Herne Hill—it can be got at if you require it.

"I am sincerely glad and grateful for all you tell me of your proposed work.—Most truly yours,

"J. Ruskin."

Ruskin, however, was not the only famous writer who had his eye on the young man working away in Liverpool. Already Matthew Arnold and Lord Houghton had made friendly and encouraging advances—the former writing him a long letter of praise concerning an essay of Caine's which had come into his hands, and the latter asking Henry Bright (the H. A. B. of Hawthorne) to arrange an interview between himself and the rising young *littérateur*. These marks of distinct encouragement from eminent and well-loved men were a source of keen pleasure to Hall Caine; they not only gave him confidence in his own powers, amid many discouraging circumstances, but made him feel that his strenuous labour was not being done in vain.

CHAPTER III

1879-1884

In the year 1878 an event of the greatest importance to Hall Caine's future life happened; he became acquainted with the poems of Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Little did the eager young student of literature imagine, when he first heard the name of one of the most subtle and alluring poets of the last century, that his life would one day be joined with his. Rossetti was to exercise an influence on his future the full extent of which cannot even now be estimated. In his fascinating *Recollections of Rossetti* Mr Caine tells, with a certain amount of detail, the story of his friendship with the poet. The story is a deeply interesting one, and in some respects without precedent in Literature. Their friendship

was an honourable affair to both of them—more especially to the younger man, who not only gave up many months of his early youth when, maybe, he would have preferred to have been battling with a still unconquered world, but also sacrificed much of his peace of mind in his endeavour to make happy the last hours of Rossetti's troubled life. On the other hand, what he lost in health of body and mind, he gained in intellectual stimulus; for Rossetti had a mind richly stored with poetic and artistic lore, and the strangely beautiful dreams and phantasmagoria that flitted through his brain undoubtedly did a great deal towards stirring up the imagination of the future novelist, and inciting him to further achievement. As I think of the poet and his enthusiast talking for many hours together in Chelsea; as I think of them afterwards in their loneliness in the Vale of St John; and as I ponder over those last tragic days together at Birchington, I see many examples of sacrifice on the part of Hall Caine, and many, many bitter hours when

the poet, forced by what seemed almost a power outside himself, gave way to the accursed drug which killed him. A weak, febrile mind would have given way under the strain of constant companionship with Rossetti during the last months of his life; but Hall Caine had more than this to weigh down his vigorous young intellect. For several weeks he had the sole responsibility of the poet's life on his shoulders, and it even became necessary for him to regulate the doses of chloral which was Life and Death to the diseased man with whom he lived; and many were the extremities to which he was put in order to hide the fatal drug from his friend. The story of their friendship, quite apart from its own intrinsic interest, is essential to any honest attempt to understand the development of the novelist's mind.

It was in the early spring of 1879 that Rossetti wrote his first letter to Hall Caine. It reads as follows:—

"16 Cheyne Walk, Chelsea,
"29th *July* 1879.

"Dear Mr Caine, — I am much struck by

the generous enthusiasm displayed in your lecture, and by the ability with which it is written. Your estimate of the impulses influencing my poetry is such as I should wish it to suggest, and this suggestion, I believe, it will have always for a true-hearted nature. You say that you are grateful to me: my response is, that I am grateful to you: for you have spoken out heartily and unfalteringly for the work you love.

"I daresay you sometimes come to London. I should be very glad to know you, and would ask you, if you thought of calling, to give me a day's notice when to expect you, as I am not always able to see visitors without appointment. The afternoon about 5 might suit me, or else the evening about 9.30 p.m.—With all best wishes, Yours sincerely,

"D. G. ROSSETTI.

"T. H. CAINE, Esq."

This was sent in reply to a note of Hall Caine's covering a copy of a lecture he had twice or thrice delivered in Liverpool, on Rossetti's poetry. The lecture was subsequently printed in a magazine, and some little time after its publication he conceived the idea of sending a copy to the poet. This letter was the first of nearly two hundred which followed in quick succession. Rossetti's generous nature immediately recognised the enthusiasm of his admirer, and Hall Caine writes in his *Recollections of*

Rossetti: "It is hardly necessary to say that I was . . . delighted with the warmth of the reception accorded to my essay, and with the revelation the letters appeared to contain of a sincere and unselfish nature." Mr Caine was naturally somewhat chary of seeming to seek favour from the distinguished poet, and his purpose of bringing to Rossetti's knowledge the contents of his essay being served, he withdrew from the correspondence and "there ensued an interval in which I did not write to him." Rossetti then wrote :—

"My Dear Caine,—Let me assure you at once that correspondence with yourself is one of my best pleasures, and that you cannot write too much or too often for *me;* though after what you have told me as to the apportioning of your time, I should be unwilling to encroach unduly upon it."

This at once put at rest all doubts that troubled Mr Caine, and a long, ardent correspondence ensued.

During the time that Hall Caine was engaged in writing to Rossetti, his life was an exceedingly busy one, and full of many

and varied interests. As we have seen, he was engaged all day in office work—uncongenial, one can imagine, and perhaps even irksome. At night—sometimes *all* night—he worked at his books, reading and writing, for he had a good deal to do in order to catch up with others who had enjoyed better opportunities. His life was far from unhappy, in spite of the checked ambition which was beginning to dominate him. He had friends of like mind and tastes with his own, and his work in connection with the Liverpool Notes and Queries Shakespearian Society brought him in contact with many interesting people. Still, he was longing to be away — longing to test his strength with the strength of the world, and desiring nothing better than to work out his destiny. The story of how he threw off the shackles of conventional life in Liverpool and escaped to the mountains of Cumberland is by no means uncharacteristic, and I may perhaps be pardoned if I tell it here pretty much as Mr Caine himself related it to me.

In 1881 his health seemed on the point of breaking down. He mentioned the fact to his employer, with whom, by now, he was on terms of friendship. Perhaps business was pressing, perhaps there were good and sufficient reasons of some other kind, but at all events little attention was taken, and for a week or two Mr Caine worked on uncomplainingly. But a time came when he felt that if he wished to preserve his health he must have an immediate holiday, so, giving up his keys to his fellow clerk, he walked out of the office and never returned, in spite of the affectionate and solicitous letters which followed him. But he had had more than enough of office life, and had made up his mind to devote his energies to Literature. At this time he possessed a sum of about thirty pounds, and was delivering a course of twenty-four lectures for the Liverpool Corporation. For each lecture he received two or three guineas, but that was all that stood between him and the bottom of the purse. But in his heart of hearts he knew that Literature

was the only profession in the world for him, and that the sooner he began to devote his life to it the better. At this date, Hall Caine had twice stayed with Rossetti at his house in Chelsea. He had found the poet cheerful and in good health, but the mental atmosphere in which he lived was almost morbid. "The gloom, the mediæval furniture, the brass censers, sacramental cups, lamps and crucifixes conspired, I thought, to make the atmosphere of a dwelling-house heavy and unwholesome." But he felt that by personal contact with the man he had been brought much nearer to him in spirit, and there existed between them an affectionate regard such as father and son might have for each other. The younger man was soon to be called upon to make a sacrifice on behalf of his friend, and with that "genius for friendship" of which we have already heard, the sacrifice was made eagerly enough. Hall Caine had not been settled long at the Vale of St John before Rossetti wrote saying that he too was ill—bodily and mentally, and that he must soon leave London. If only he

could get away to the country, he was sure he would be better. "Supposing," he wrote, "I were to ask you to come to town in a fortnight's time from now—I returning with you for a while into the country—would that be feasible to you?" For a few days he remained undecided, but at length wrote to the Vale of St John asking Mr Caine to come to him. Mr Caine went, but on arriving at Rossetti's house found the poet unwilling to move. A great change had now taken place. Rossetti had lost his cheerfulness, his fund of good spirits. He was ill, and more than ever a slave to chloral. His mind was unsettled and gloomy, and he suffered from the hallucination that nearly all his friends had proved faithless. He longed to escape from London, but yet he had not the strength of mind to take the necessary steps. His doctor gave his permission for a visit to Cumberland, but still Rossetti would not go. At last, yielding to the persuasion of Mr Caine, strongly supported by the advice of Rossetti's older and more immediate friends,

Theodore Watts, Frederick Shields and William Rossetti, his brother, who thought the bracing mountain air of Cumberland would work wonders, Rossetti consented to go. And now ensued a time of anxiety for Hall Caine. They were entirely alone in the little house they had rented in the mountains, save for a nurse to attend to the wants of the sick man; and Caine had the real responsibility of Rossetti's life on his shoulders. Rossetti could not sleep, so night was turned into day and day into night. They would sit up through the dark hours together, with the sound of the flooded ghyll outside, and within the tones of Caine's voice as he read aloud to Rossetti to while the hours away. And as he read, the poet would walk up and down the oblong room, restless, nervous, and longing to get at the chloral which was safely locked away in a place he knew not of. The hot, quick, anguishing thirst for chloral was on him during these days, and when Rossetti used to come to Hall Caine's bedside and beg for an extra dose, the younger man

found him simply irresistible, and often had to give way to his friend's earnest pleading. There were other grave responsibilities thrust upon him of which I cannot speak; suffice it to say that he bore them bravely and uncomplainingly, and came out from his trial a more experienced and a stronger man.

It was during these long sleepless nights that Hall Caine first told Rossetti the outline of the story which was afterwards to be the framework of his first novel, *The Shadow of a Crime*. This story, which is dealt with in an ensuing chapter, although it appealed to Rossetti's imagination, did not convince him that it would make a good novel. It was too terrible—too unsympathetic. He urged Caine to try his hand at a Manx novel, and told him that it would be no mean ambition to strive to become the bard of Manxland. The plot was discussed from every point of view, but as yet the writing of it had not been commenced. Perhaps the young student of Literature did not yet feel quite strong enough in ex-

perience and imagination to attempt so large a scheme; perhaps he was too engrossed reading Smollett, Fielding and Richardson for his Liverpool lectures; or perhaps he had seen that Rossetti's criticism was a just one, and that the story would prove cold and inhuman. Whatever the reason, the fact remains that he did not begin to work on his first novel until some time afterwards when Rossetti lay in his grave, but month by month, week by week, it was getting a stronger and yet stronger hold on his imagination, until it dominated him entirely. The familiar legend of his youth became a part of his everyday life, a part of his very being. It obsessed him almost entirely to the exclusion of all other interests; but he restrained himself day by day, until restraint was no longer possible, and then in a fever of impatience and enthusiasm he began to write.

Meanwhile Rossetti was gradually becoming worse and worse, and Caine more and more anxious. What was to be done? They were hundreds of miles away from

home and older and more experienced friends, and Rossetti seemed too ill to travel. It was a critical time for both of them. Rossetti was by turns irritable and genial, bad-tempered and high-spirited, full of life and languidly indolent; but these various moods were not reflected in his companion —he was always anxious, always wondering what was going to happen. The solitude, the anxiety and the poor state of his own health made him suffer keenly; yet even now he confesses that he looks back with great tenderness and gratitude to those four weeks with Rossetti among the Cumberland hills. At length it was decided that they should return home, and the instant the decision was made Rossetti's spirits rose. Perhaps he had already a premonition of his nearly-approaching death, and felt more at ease that he was to die near friends and kindred instead of in the almost tragic silence and loneliness of Cumberland. He returned worse in health and spirits than he had come, and as soon as his doctor saw him he realised that the time had arrived when

drastic measures should be taken. Rossetti had an attack of paralysis, and from that time his drug was absolutely forbidden him. The pain that ensued was intense, and he became delirious with desire for chloral. A few days after, however, he rallied and became more cheerful, and it was decided that he should stay for a time at a bungalow at Birchington-on-Sea which had very opportunely been placed at his service. Thither he went with Hall Caine, his constant friend and comforter, and there he died shortly afterwards — literally in his young friend's arms, for at the last moments Caine had put his arm about Rossetti to raise him up, in order to relieve his apparent pain.

In attempting to gauge the kind of influence which Rossetti exercised over Hall Caine, it must not be overlooked that the poet was old enough to be the younger man's father; indeed, both in letters and conversation, he more than once expressed the wish that he *was* his father. When Caine first knew Rossetti, the latter's health and nerves were already on the point of

breaking down, and he was even then a victim to the chloral-taking habit. He was morbid and fanciful; his body diseased, and his mind unhealthy. Caine, on the other hand, had fair health and a vigorous, lusty mind. What came to pass is only what a spectator might have guessed; the older man attracted and fascinated the younger, and there can be little doubt that this fascination had by no means an entirely healthy influence over Hall Caine. Indeed, he tells us in his *Recollections of Rossetti* that one day he found himself becoming the victim of the very delusions which so tortured his friend, and this is but one instance out of many by means of which it might be shown that the poet's influence over the budding novelist was one of at least questionable value. As I have already remarked, it would have required a peculiarly strong and vigorous mind and body to have lived with Rossetti towards the end of his life without being detrimentally influenced by his personality; but fortunately for Hall Caine, this doubtful part of the influence was only temporary,

while the good and noble part of it was permanent, and was felt long after the personal intercourse came to its end. It must not be forgotten, too, that Hall Caine's imagination was with him a masterful power which he had not yet learned to control properly, and his sensitive, responsive disposition made him particularly impressionable. But it cannot be doubted that the friendship of these two men, both strongly, indeed peculiarly individual, had a great deal to do in developing the character of the younger man. It was inevitable that a man of Rossetti's genius and character should inflame his imagination and light up many beacons of his intellect.

When a year or two later Hall Caine began to strike out for himself it was bruited abroad that he was making capital out of the names of his friends—in other words, that he was making a bid for Fame by the help of those who constituted the Rossetti circle.

This, of course, was as absurd as it was untrue. People said that Caine had been

Rossetti's secretary, and some foolish gossips went so far as to declare that he had been his valet. The only relationship that existed between them was one of friendship. Hall Caine looked on Rossetti with enthusiastic admiration and something almost approaching reverence, and Rossetti regarded him with the keen interest one naturally takes in the career of a young man of genius. For Rossetti often encouraged his young friend by bidding him have no anxiety as to what the future held for him, declaring that Fame was bound to come to him sooner or later. It speaks much for Rossetti's perspicacity that he was able to discern the genius of his friend, for at this time Hall Caine had produced little or nothing that he cares to recognise now. He had written a quantity of mediocre verse, and a few sonnets of real and lasting beauty; but that was all. Rossetti insisted that Caine's vocation lay in the writing of fervid and impassioned prose, and the truth of this remark has been demonstrated over and over again since it was first uttered.

I have not read the essay which Hall Caine wrote on the poetry of Rossetti, and which was the means of bringing the two men together, but I can very well imagine what it was in the poet that attracted him. Different as the two men seem to be in almost every particular save their mutual love of Beauty, there is one common trait which bound them together: they were both strangely and strongly attracted towards the supernatural and spiritual. There is an air of mystery, of unknown and unseen terrors and forces in Rossetti's poetry that is also breathed in the earlier novels of Hall Caine. To this very day, Hall Caine is a firm believer in many of the phenomena which, by ignorant people, are placed in the category of spiritualism. For instance, he believes in second sight. On several occasions he has himself had distinct and indisputable warnings of accidents some minutes before they actually happened. A case in point occurred the day previous to my last visit to Greeba Castle. A young lady was bicycling through Greeba on the

way to Peel. She was "scorching," but, so far as one could judge, had complete command over her machine. Mr Caine happened to be in the road at the time with a friend, and as the lady passed he turned to his companion and said: "That girl will meet with an accident before she has turned the corner!" They watched her for a minute or so with interest, and then everything happened as the novelist had predicted. She collided with an unsuspecting cow, which appeared from some unseen place, and fell to the ground almost insensible. I could, if it were necessary, produce other instances of the exercise of the somewhat mysterious faculty for foreseeing which have come within my own observation.

Rossetti was always powerfully attracted by the supernatural, as, indeed, men of imagination usually are, and this mutual attraction undoubtedly served to bind the two writers together. Caine's attraction to and study of Coleridge had undoubtedly prepared him for the advent of Rossetti,

for the mystic imagery, the finished technique and the mandragora-like spell of the earlier poet were reproduced in detail by the later. Again, the supernatural in Shakespeare had received Caine's particular study, and throughout his life it has been a powerful factor in stirring up his imagination.

In 1882 — the year of Rossetti's death —appeared Hall Caine's *Recollections of Rossetti*, which has already been referred to several times in this chapter. For this he received forty pounds. The book made something of a sensation in the literary world, owing chiefly, or perhaps entirely, to its subject, and the intimate nature of its revelations, but it did not in the least enhance its author's reputation among the large body of general readers. Mr Caine does not to-day regard this product of his earlier years with any feeling of respect. It was edited with the kindest and best possible intentions by Rossetti's friends and relatives, and many important changes were insisted on. I myself have read the original

version side by side with that which was eventually published, and I have not the least hesitation in saying that the unedited account which Mr Caine wrote of his relations with his revered friend is vastly superior to that with which the public is familiar.

Before I leave Rossetti and turn to the novels of the subject of this monograph, I should like to give a letter of the late Mr Robert Buchanan, addressed by him to Mr Caine after reading the latter's obituary notice of his friend in the *Academy*. To all who know anything of the life of Rossetti, it will prove of exceptional interest, for it bears directly upon one of the causes of his premature death, and throws fresh light on one of the most widely-discussed episodes of nineteenth-century literature.

"30 Boulevard Ste Beuve,
"Boulogne-sur-Mer,
"France, *May* 18 [1882].

"Dear Sir,—I have read with deep interest your memorial of poor Rossetti, and been particularly moved by your passing allusion to myself. I don't know if your intention was to heap 'coals of fire' on my head,

but whether or not you have succeeded. I have often regretted my old criticism on your friend, not so much because it was stupid, but because, after all, I doubt one poet's right to criticise another. For the rest, I have long been of opinion that Rossetti was a great spirit; and in that belief I inscribed to him my 'God and the Man.'

"I suppose it was lack of courage which kept me from putting his name boldly on the preprint of my book; but had I dreamed he was ill or ailing, how eagerly would I not have done so! Still, I cannot conceive anyone mistaking the words of that dedication. Some people have been foolish enough to take it as addressed to Swinburne; but every line of it is against that supposition. I wonder now, if Rossetti himself knew of, and understood, that inscription? Perhaps you could tell me, and to ask you I write this letter. It would be a sincere satisfaction to me to know that he *did* read it, and accepted it in the spirit in which it was written.

"I am here on my way to Paris, but after this week my address will be uncertain. A letter sent to 30 Queen Anne St., Cavendish Square, will always find me.—I am, dear sir, yours faithfully, ROBERT BUCHANAN.

"T. HALL CAINE, Esq."

In the meantime, Caine had also published an anthology of sonnets, entitled *Sonnets of Three Centuries* (a particularly handsome volume, prefaced by a very capable and original essay on the history of the sonnet), and a volume of essays entitled *Cobwebs of*

Criticism. Neither of these books did much to widen his reputation, but the volume of sonnets was a labour of love, and the essays contained in the latter consisted chiefly of lectures delivered in Liverpool.

CHAPTER IV

THE SHADOW OF A CRIME AND *A SON OF HAGAR*

After the death of Rossetti, Hall Caine spent eighteen months in daily journalism in London writing his Rossetti recollections, and reviewing books, etc., for the *Academy* and *Athenæum*. He was also employed as a leader-writer on the *Liverpool Mercury* at a salary beginning at a hundred pounds per annum. This life, honourable and fascinating as it was, did not satisfy him, however. He was beginning to look further afield. Besides, he was being dominated by the legend which was to be the germ of his first novel.

So, in order to obtain complete immunity from all interruption, social and professional, he "settled in a little bungalow of three rooms in a garden near the beach at Sandown in the Isle of Wight." In the

meantime he had married, and at the time of settling at Sandown he had enough money to keep him going for about four months. But his story was deeply rooted in his mind and heart, and he feared nothing —not even failure. The legend that so dominated him was as follows. (I quote from *The Idler*, to which magazine Mr Caine contributed an article entitled *My First Book*) :—

"One of the oldest legends of the Lake mountains tells of the time of the plague. The people were afraid to go to market, afraid to meet at church and afraid to pass on the highway. When any lonely body was ill, the nearest neighbour left meat and drink at the door of the afflicted house, and knocked and ran away. In these days a widow and two sons lived in one of the darkest of the valleys. The younger son died, and the body had to be carried over the mountains to be buried. Its course lay across Sty Head Pass, a bleak and 'brant' place, where the winds are often high. The eldest son, a strong-hearted lad,

undertook the duty. He strapped the coffin on to the back of a young horse, and they started away. The day was wild, and on the top of the pass, where the path dips into Wastdale, between the breast of Great Gable and the heights of Scawfell, the wind rose to a gale. The horse was terrified. It broke away and galloped over the fells, carrying its burden with it. The lad followed and searched for it, but in vain, and he had to go home at last, unsatisfied.

"This was in the spring, and nearly all the summer through the surviving son of the widow was out on the mountains, trying to recover the runaway horse, but never once did he catch sight of it, though sometimes, as he turned homeward at night, he thought he heard, in the gathering darkness, above the sough of the wind, the horse's neigh. Then winter came, and the mother died. Once more the dead body had to be carried over the fells for burial, and once again the coffin was strapped on the back of a horse. It was an old mare that was chosen this time, the mother of the young

one that had been lost. The snow lay deep on the pass, and from the cliffs of the Scawfell pikes it hung in great toppling masses. All went well with the little funeral party until they came to the top of the pass, and though the day was dead calm the son held the rein with a hand that was like a vice. But just as the mare reached the spot where the wind had frightened the young horse, there was a terrific noise. An immense body of the snow had parted at that instant from the beetling heights overhead, and rushed down into the valley with the movement as of a mighty earthquake, and the deafening sound as of a peal of thunder. The dale echoed and re-echoed from side to side, and from height to height. The old mare was affrighted; she reared, leapt, flung her master away, and galloped off. When they had recovered from their consternation, the funeral party gave chase, and at length, down in a hollow place, they thought they saw what they were in search of. It was a horse with something strapped on its

back. When they came up with it they found it was the *young* horse, with the coffin of the younger son. They led it away, and buried the body that it had carried so long, but the old mare they never recovered, and the body of the mother never found sepulchre."

It will be seen at a glance that this legend contains great dramatic and imaginative possibilities, but for Hall Caine its fascination lay in its "shadow and suggestion of the supernatural." When Rossetti was still alive, Mr Caine had discussed with him its merits as the foundation for a novel; but the poet, as we have seen, was against the idea. He did not see the possibility of getting any sympathy into it. This judgment, coming from so expert and experienced a quarter, disheartened the younger man, and he "let the idea go back to the dark chambers of memory." But it was of no use, the ghost would not be laid. The idea recurred to him at intervals, and each time it impressed him more and more. At last, when settled

in the Isle of Wight, he thought he had found a way of evading Rossetti's criticism. "The sympathy was to be got out of the elder son. He was to think God's hand was upon him. But whom God's hand rested on had God at his right hand; so the elder son was to be a splendid fellow—brave, strong, calm, patient, long-suffering, a victim of unrequited love, a man standing square on his legs against all weathers." Then he began to write; but he was faced by a thousand difficulties. It was his desire to grip the reader's interest from the very outset, and it took him a fortnight's hard work to make what he judged to be a satisfactory beginning. Within three months it was practically finished. He showed it first to Mr J. S. Cotton, an old and valued friend and at that time editor of the *Academy*. "His rapid mind saw a new opportunity. 'You want *peine forte et dure*,' he said. 'What's that?' I asked. 'An old punishment—a beautiful thing,' he answered. 'Where's my dear old Blackstone?' and the statute concerning the

punishment for standing mute was read to me. It was just the thing I wanted for my hero, and I was in rapture, but I was also in despair. To work this fresh interest into my theme half of what I had written would need to be destroyed!"

But destroyed it was, and after two months' arduous labour, he took it to the late John Lovell, editor of the *Liverpool Mercury*. "It's crude," he said. "But it only wants sub-editing." Imagine the young author's feelings! Sub-editing, indeed! But again he re-wrote it, and this time to some purpose, for Mr Lovell offered him a hundred pounds for the serial right in the *Liverpool Weekly Mercury*. This offer was, of course, accepted.

Mr Caine was now living in rooms on the fourth floor of New Court, in Lincoln's Inn. He called upon several publishers with the object of getting his novel issued in volume form; eventually Chatto & Windus made him an offer which he accepted, and at this date the book has gone through more editions than I care to

count. It was an immediate and undoubted success, and the only thing that Mr Caine regrets with regard to it is the fact that he was forced to sell it outright instead of on the royalty system. Hard cash was what he wanted, though the amount he received in ready money would have been trebled many times over if he had been paid according to the number of copies sold.

As the first novel of a young man (and, at this time, Mr Caine was quite painfully young) *The Shadow of a Crime* shows little evidence of crudity. It is coherent, cohesive and mature. It is true, the melodramatic interest is often too insistent, and that the novelist expects too much from the credulity of the reader; but these faults apart, the book is the book of a grown man and a practised writer. It evinces an intimate knowledge of Cumberland life and dialect, and has the dignity and strength of a work of genius.

After the publication of *The Shadow of a Crime* a time of need ensued. He canvassed many publishers and offered him-

self as reader, but he was invariably turned away. Whatever indignity and humiliation was thrust upon him only made him more determined to succeed. He never knew when he was beaten. He never *was* beaten, for he never withdrew from his hand-to-hand fight with the world, but struggled on with the passionate conviction that he would one day come off the winner. So, undaunted, he set about the writing of a new work, *A Son of Hagar*.

When this book was nearing completion, he expressed a wish to Mr Richard Gowing to dedicate it to Mr R. D. Blackmore, the author of *Lorna Doone*. Mr Gowing, who was a friend of Mr Blackmore's, immediately communicated with him and received the following reply :—

"TEDDINGTON, *December* 21, 1886.

"MY DEAR MR GOWING,—It will give me great pleasure to find a work of Mr Hall Caine's inscribed to myself. I have not read any book of his, although I have wished to do so. *The Shadow of a Crime* slipped by me somehow, when I was very busy; but I know that it was a fine work. My name is not of such repute that he need entertain any fear of misconstruction. His own work will lead him on; if he shows the proper

value for it, in the care which makes it good—as I gather from his letter that he does. Please to tell him that I am proud of his goodwill and approval. I hope that you are doing well, and offer my best wishes for the Christmas, and the coming year.

"For myself, I met with an accident last June, which crippled me for several months; but at last I begin to plod again, and renew my acquaintance with plant and tree. They are all in great tribulation now, and many will never see the coming year.—Believe me, with kind regards, very truly yours, R. D. Blackmore."

Three months later he wrote the following letter to Mr Caine himself:—

"Teddington, *March* 14, 1887.

"My Dear Mr Caine,—Your publishers have kindly sent me a copy of *The Shadow of a Crime*, and I am reading it carefully. Your style does not permit any skipping; no work that does so is of much value. So far as I can yet judge, the book is full of power and true imagination. To the critical gift I have no claim; but I seem to myself to know when I come across genuine matter. And you have also that respect for yourself and your readers which is a *sine qua non* for the achievement of great work. However, I will not show my own deficiency in that quality by offering premature remarks; only I am eager to express my impressions of pleasure and admiration.

"I hope that your health will soon be restored, and your mind refreshed with total change. I find myself much under par, with long bronchial attack.

"Your second work, *A Son of Hagar*, will be looked for by me with eager anticipation; but *The Shadow of a Crime* will hold me for at least a week, in my present state; as I can only read at night, and am bound just now to keep early hours.

"I have not heard a word about *Springhaven*, whether it goes, or sticks fast; except that an extract from the *Whitehall Review* of last week has been sent to me.

"With many thanks for your kind words, and all good wishes for your work,—I am, always truly yours,

"R. D. BLACKMORE."

A Son of Hagar was completed in 1886, as was also a life of Coleridge which was written in three weeks. The former brought him three hundred pounds; the latter thirty pounds. Coleridge had always been a favourite study of Hall Caine's; we have seen that as a young man in Liverpool he was particularly attracted towards his work, and the incidents of the great poet's life had received his careful and unremitting attention. But the series for which it was written was one devoted to brief biographies only, and Mr Caine was unable to make use of the vast store of knowledge which he had so patiently acquired. Still, the biography was one of the best of the series, and though it

brought neither fame nor fortune to its author, it undoubtedly did something towards establishing his reputation as an original and thoughtful critic.

A Son of Hagar was written on somewhat the same lines as *The Shadow of a Crime;* that is to say, there is the same knowledge of the life of the Cumberland people of the "statesman" class, the same intimate acquaintance with Cumberland dialect, and the same partiality for melodrama and, one must acknowledge, improbable incident. Judged by present-day standards, this book achieved what would be called remarkable popular success; but the success was not sufficient to satisfy the consuming ambition of the young novelist. He said to himself, "I will write one more book. I will put into it all the work that is in me, and if the public still remains indifferent, I will never write another." These words, uttered in the heat of the moment, must be taken *cum grano salis;* for I feel convinced that if Mr Caine had written ten or a dozen unsuccessful works, he would still have continued

faithful to the novel as a means of expressing his own personality and his views of the complex individual and social life as he has found it, not only in history, but in these hot, passionate days of a new century. Yet, the fact remains, that what he chose to consider his limited success did not satisfy him.

I am privileged to give the following letters written by Mr Blackmore to Mr Caine during the year 1887.

"TEDDINGTON.

"MY DEAR MR CAINE,—I thank you heartily for your kind letter, and look forward to the pleasure of reading your new work, which I have not seen as yet.

"From what Mr Gowing said, I feared that you were not at present in strong health, and I trust that you will not allow yourself to be worried by doubts about your work, or distressed by too zealous exertion. However untidy your garden may be—and it can scarcely be worse than mine—the *Son of Hagar* should be expelled for some hours daily from that quiet spot."

Mr Blackmore then proceeds to give vent to the irritation which he felt towards humanity in general, and his publisher's corrector of proofs in particular. This latter gentleman seems to have had his own ideas as to correct grammar and punctuation ; these

ideas, however, did not coincide with those of Mr Blackmore. He adds :—

"The main point is to take them easily; even as one does the supernatural wisdom of Reviewers.

"With the best wishes for your new story—may the Son be the child of promise!—I am, dear sir, very truly yours, R. D. BLACKMORE."

"HALL CAINE, Esq."

The second letter was written concerning Caine's *Life of Coleridge*—interesting for its reference to the first reviews of *Lorna Doone.*

"TEDDINGTON, *May* 7, 1887.

"MY DEAR MR CAINE,—I am deeply engaged with your interesting book, and thank you for so kindly sending it. The *Son of Hagar* has not come this way yet, and I put him vainly upon my book-list. However, it is good not to have one's pleasures too abundantly—*commendat rarior usus.*

"Have you ever dealt at all with ——, the great 'organiser' of Newspaper novels? He has asked me more than once to be distributed in that way; but hitherto I have declined. His terms are fair—so far as I can judge—and he seems a sharp man of business. Writers of higher repute than mine have marched under his standard; but I doubt me whether my 'politics' would suit his mighty horde.

"I conclude that you have left the Isle of Man, and hope you are working at a book of the *quocunque jeceris stabit.* Any work of yours will now command a larger

circle than the critics; to whom (like myself) you owe little. If the matter were of more interest, I would print the *first notices* of *Lorna Doone*, which they now quote as a standard. I have them somewhere, and a damp bed they are to smother a shy guest in. But you know well enough how these men fumble the keys of an open door.

"I must now be off to my pipes and Coleridge. I am heartily glad to find you * against that far inferior—and, to my mind, prosy fellow—Southey.—With kind regards, I am very truly yours,

"R. D. BLACKMORE."

"HALL CAINE, Esq."

Mr Caine has inscribed this note at the head of the following. "This letter was written about *A Son of Hagar*, which was dedicated to Blackmore. The censorious part of it is very just.—H. C."

"TEDDINGTON, *August* 25, 1887.

"MY DEAR MR CAINE,—I would not write again until I had read your book, which I have now done with great care. My opinion is of very little value, but so far as I can distinctly form one, it is nearly as follows. There is any amount of vigour and power, and some real pathos (which is, of course, a part of power), also there are many other merits—strong English style, great knowledge of character, keen observation, and much originality.

"But I think you will improve upon this book vastly, as experience grows. The incidents appear to me to be huddled, without sense of proportion now and then, and there is much strain upon credulity. But I am loth to

* Word undecipherable.

find fault, knowing that I am not a skilled workman myself.

"We are just leaving home, in the hope—probably a vain one—of doing some good to my helpless hand, whose failure is a great loss to me in every branch of garden work. I think of invading T. Hardy's land—Swanage or the neighbourhood, almost the only part of the southern coast unknown to me. Further I would gladly go, but my wife cannot bear a long journey, or changes of conveyance. After our return I shall be very glad to see you, though I cannot advise much about Wales. North Wales is, of course, much the more picturesque, and the style of the natives more Cymric; whereas I am chiefly acquainted with the south. The love of truth seems to have been overlooked in the composition of Welsh character. The lower classes do not even resent the charge of lying, and consider it disgraceful mainly as a blot upon their intellect. But I must not be hard upon them, as my mother's family, though English in the main, possessed many veins of Taffic fluid.

"I hope that you are now in strong health again, after the passing of the solid hot waves. As a fruit-grower, I have suffered bitter woes, some of my trees having shed all their fruit and none having fine crop as they promised. The rain came in earnest last week, but too late, and now we could take as much again.—With all good wishes, I am, truly yours, R. D. Blackmore."

CHAPTER V

THE DEEMSTER

It was *The Deemster* that brought Hall Caine fame. It was written in a mood of dissatisfaction, of disappointment. He felt that he had it in him to write a novel that should be worthy of the world's respect, and though *The Shadow of a Crime* and *A Son of Hagar* were, in no sense, failures, yet they had not met with the success for which the young novelist was so ardently longing. This was to be his first book dealing with Manx life, customs and character, and he wrote it in the island with all the beautiful landscape and the glorious sea for an inspiration.

The plot of the book is founded on the story of the Prodigal Son. It teaches the doctrine of purification by suffering, though

by no stretch of the imagination can it be called a "book with a purpose." Rather is it an imaginative picture of wonderful pathos, and the moral which it enforces is never hinted at; it is revealed in the very atmosphere of the book, in its childlike purity, in its passionate simplicity.

The Prodigal Son is Daniel, son of Gilchrist Mylrea, Bishop of Man. His mother died at his birth, and so during the early years of his young life his father acted as mother, nurse, teacher, playmate and friend. Here is a picture of father and son, with Mona and Ewan, Dan's cousins and housemates.

Meantime Bishop's Court was musical with children's voices, and with the patter of tiny feet that ferreted out every nook and cranny of the old place. There was Ewan, the Deemster's son, a slight, sensitive boy, who listened to you with head aslant, and with absent looks. There was wee Mona, Ewan's meek sister, with the big eyes and the quiet ways, who liked to be fondled, and would cry sometimes when no one knew why. And there was Daniel—Danny—Dan, the Bishop's boy, a braw little rogue, with a slice of the man in him, as broad as he was long, with tousled fair head and face usually smudged, laughing a good deal, and not crying

over much, loving a good tug or a delightful bit of a fight, and always feeling high disdain at being kissed. And the Bishop, God bless him! was father and mother both to the motherless brood, though Kerry Quayle was kept as nurse. He would tell a story, or perhaps sing one, while Mona sat on his knee with her pretty head resting on his breast, and Ewan held on to his chair with his shy head hanging on his own shoulder, and his eyes looking out at the window, listening intently in his queer little absent way. And when Dan, in lordly contempt of such doings, would break in on song or story, and tear his way up the back of the chair to the back of the Bishop, Mona would be set on her feet, and the biggest baby of the four there present would slide down on to his hands and knees and creep along the floor with the great little man astride him, and whinny like a horse, or perhaps bark like a dog, and pretend to leap the four-bar gate of the baby's chair tumbled down on its side. And when Dan would slide from his saddle, and the restless horseman would turn coachman and tug the mane of his steed, and all the Bishop's long hair would tumble over his face, what shrieks of laughter, what rolling on the ground and tossing up of bare legs! And then when supper-time came, and the porridge would be brought in, and little Mona would begin to whimper because she had to eat it, and Ewan to fret because it was barley porridge and not oaten cake, and Dan to devour his share with silent industry, and then bellow for more than was good for him, what schemes the good Bishop resorted to, what promises he made, what crafty tricks he learned, what an artful old pate his simple head suddenly became! And then, when Kerry came with the tub and the towels, and three little naked bodies

had to be bathed, and the Bishop stole away to his unfinished sermon, and little Mona's wet hands clung to Kerry's dress, and Ewan, standing bolt upright in the three inches of water, blubbered while he rubbed the sponge over an inch and a half of one cheek, and Dan sat on his haunches in the bottom of the tub splashing the water on every side, and shrieking at every splash ; then the fearful commotion would bring the Bishop back from the dusky room upstairs, where the shaded lamp burned on a table that was littered with papers. And at last, when the day's big battle was done, and night's bigger battle begun ; and three night-dresses were popped over three weary heads that dodged them when they could, the Bishop would carry three sleepless, squealing piggies to bed—Mona at his breast because she was little, Ewan at his back because he was big, and Dan across his shoulders because he could not get to any loftier perch. Presently there would be three little pairs of knees by the crib side, and then three little flaxen polls on the pillow, tumbling and tossing, and with the great dark head of the Bishop shaking gravely at them from over the counterpane, and then a hush broken by a question lisped drowsily, or a baby rhyme that ran a line or two and stopped, and at length the long deep quiet and the silence of sleep, and the Bishop going off on tiptoe to the dusky room with the shaded lamp, and to-morrow's sermon lying half-written beneath it.

Can you not see them ?—the four innocent children playing their games as though they were the whole world. But their happiness was soon cut short. Thorkell Mylrea, the

Deemster and the father of Ewan and Mona, and the evil genius of the book, calls at Bishop's Court, and takes his children away. "Let a father treat his children as the world will treat them when they have nothing but the world for their father," he says, and henceforth the children's joy is taken away. But Dan lives on with his father, the Bishop, laughing, playing his pranks, and making of the Court one huge nursery. The years pass, and a friendship like that of David and Jonathan springs up between Dan and Ewan. But Dan is headstrong, wilful and impetuous. He runs almost wild, and his great strength and love of sport lead him into the companionship of good-for-noughts. He quarrels with Ewan, and, in a scene of great beauty and tenderness, a reconciliation is effected. But again they quarrel, and Dan strikes Ewan a terrible blow which has far-reaching consequences. Dan is covered with shame, and feels abased in his very soul. And then, assailed by the most subtle temptation, Dan commits forgery, and Ewan, by now a priest, tells a lie to save

him. And so Dan, the noble-hearted, pure-minded soul, sinks deeper and deeper into petty sins. He wastes his substance, idles, drinks—does all that a tortured weak soul will do when it has begun to step on the downward path. The end of it all is that in fair fight Dan kills his cousin, and goes to Mona to tell her of his sin.

"Yes, yes, our Ewan is dead," he repeated in a murmur that came up from his heart. "The truest friend, the fondest brother, the whitest soul, the dearest, bravest, purest, noblest—O God! O God! dead, dead! Worse, a hundredfold worse—Mona, he is murdered."

At that she raised herself up, and a bewildered look was in her eyes.

"Murdered? No, that is not possible. He was beloved by all. There is no one who would kill him—there is no one alive with a heart so black."

"Yes, Mona, but there is," he said; "there is one man with a heart so black."

"Who is he?"

"Who! He is the foulest creature on God's earth. Oh, God in heaven! Why was he born?"

"Who is he?"

He bowed his head where he stood before her, and beads of sweat started from his brow.

"Cursed be the hour when that man was born!" he said in an awful whisper.

Then Mona's despair came upon her like a torrent

and she wept long. In the bitterness of her heart she cried,—

"Cursed indeed, cursed for ever! Dan, Dan, you must kill him—you must kill that man. . . ."

Then Dan said in a heartrending voice,—

"Mona, he did not mean to kill Ewan—they fought—it was all in the heat of blood."

Once more he tried to avoid her gaze, and once more, pale and immovable, she watched his face.

"Who is he?" she asked, with an awful calmness.

"Mona, turn your face away from me, and I will tell you," he said.

Then everything swam about her, and her pale lips grew ashy.

"Don't you know?" he asked in a whisper.

She did not turn her face, and he was compelled to look at her now. His glaring eyes were fixed upon her.

"Don't you know?" he whispered again, and then in a scarcely audible voice he said, "It was I, Mona."

The restrained power of this passage is typical of Hall Caine—not one word too much, and yet the man and woman live and breathe before our very eyes.

Mona confesses her love, and Dan leaves her to give himself up to justice. But temptation and hindrances are put in his way. It seems to be fated that his crime shall go unpunished, unatoned for. At

length, overcoming all his weakness, and with a mighty resolve to suffer the penalty of his guilt, Dan gives himself up at the Ramsey courthouse. Then follow weary months of waiting until his trial. Finally he receives his punishment on Tynwald Hill—the ancient mound where, once in each year, the laws of the island are proclaimed to the assembled people. He is sentenced by his own father to lifelong solitude. "Men and women of Man," cries the Bishop, "the sentence of the court of the barony of the island is, that this man shall be cut off from his people. Henceforth let him have no name among us, nor family, nor kin. From now for ever let no flesh touch his flesh. Let no tongue speak to him. Let no eye look on him. If he should be an-hungered, let none give him meat. When he shall be sick, let none minister to him. When his death shall come, let no man bury him. Alone let him live, alone let him die, and among the beasts of the field let him hide his unburied bones." And then follows a tear-compelling document written by Dan in his

exile, wherein it is shown how he works out his own redemption, and regains his manhood. Eventually he becomes the saviour of his people and dies in Mona's arms.

Many critics have levelled at Mr Caine a charge of unnecessary sadness in thus allowing his hero to die just at the moment when his regeneration is complete, but to my mind that is the only possible ending. Read in the right spirit the book is not sad; pervading its pages is seen a glorious optimism which not only gives one new faith in humanity, but makes one feel that life itself is a grander and nobler thing than one had ever before imagined. If Dan had had his punishment cancelled, and had married Mona—what a painful piece of bathos it would have been! And yet that is precisely what many critics desired. They seem to imagine that the temporal life is of far more importance than the spiritual. Dan's life was crowned and his death glorified by his spiritual triumph. During those years of awful loneliness he not only purified his own nature, but exalted his very soul. *The*

Deemster is no melodramatic piece of stage-work; it is a direct human document, a spiritual drama. It is the first work of Hall Caine's which has indubitably written on every page the word "genius."

It was published in 1888, and immediately created a sensation. Critics welcomed it on all hands. It was recognised as a powerful and original piece of work, and the new setting for the story added not a little to its attractiveness; for, fully in sympathy with Manxland, its laws, customs and society, Mr Caine had painted a picture of great charm and attraction. Old Kerry, Quilleash, and Hommy-beg were accepted as true portraits of Manx character, with their ingrained superstition, their vanity and their generosity. But the book did not impress the critics only; it was read far and wide by the public, and within a few months the circulation had become enormous. *The Deemster* was one of the successes of the year, and from the date of its publication the popularity of Hall Caine began.

I am permitted to give here, by the

courtesy of Mr A. P. Watt, Mr Wilkie Collins's literary executor, a letter addressed to Mr Caine by the late novelist. It is only one out of many hundreds received by Hall Caine from all parts of the world, congratulating him on his success, and offering him tributes of thanks.

"90 Gloucester Place,
"Portman Square, W.,
"London, *March* 15, 1888.

"Dear Hall Caine,—(Let us drop the formality of 'Mr'—and let me set the example because I am the oldest).

"I have waited to thank you for *The Deemster*, until I could command time enough to read the book without interruptions. Let me add that the chair in which I have enjoyed this pleasure is not the chair of the critic. What I am now writing conveys the impressions of a brother in the art.

"You have written a remarkable work of fiction—a great advance on *The Shadow of a Crime* (to my mind)—a powerful and pathetic story—the characters vividly conceived, and set in action with a master hand. Within the limits of a letter, I cannot quote a tenth part of the passages which have seized on my interest and admiration. As one example, among many others which I should like to quote, let me mention the chapters that describe the fishermen taking the dead body out to sea in the hope of concealing the murder. The motives assigned to the men and the manner in

which they express themselves show a knowledge of human nature which place you among the masters of our craft, and a superiority to temptations to conventional treatment that no words of mine can praise too highly. For a long time past, I have read nothing in contemporary fiction that approaches what you have done here. I have read the chapters twice, and, if I know anything of our art, I am sure of what I say.

"Now let me think of the next book that you will write, and let me own frankly where I see room for improvement in what the painters call, 'treatment of the subject.'

"When you next take up your pen, will you consider a little whether your tendency to dwell on what is grotesque and violent in human character does not require some discipline? Look again at 'The Deemster' and at some of the qualities and modes of thought attributed to 'Dan.'

"Again—your power as a writer sometimes misleads you, as I think, into forgetting the value of contrast. The grand picture which your story presents of terror and grief wants relief. Individually and collectively, there is variety in the human lot. We are no more continuously wretched than we are continuously happy. Next time, I want more humour, which breaks out so delightfully in old 'Quilleash.' More breaks of sunshine in your splendid cloudy sky will be a truer picture of nature—and will certainly enlarge the number of your admiring readers. Look at two of the greatest tragic stories—*Hamlet* and *The Bride of Lammermoor*, and see how Shakespeare and Scott take every opportunity of presenting contrasts, and brightening the picture at the right place.

"I believe you have not—even yet—written your best work. And here you have the proof of my sincerity. Always truly yours, WILKIE COLLINS."

The criticism contained in this letter is both sound and just, and though Mr Collins declares that in penning it he was not sitting in the chair of the critic, but in that of the novelist, yet the advice afforded is such as only the most competent critic who united the qualities of the imaginative writer could possibly have given.

Where Mr Caine particularly shows his strength in this novel, to my mind, is in the last part of all — the document written by Dan just before his death. The situation offers so many temptations to write in a falsely pathetic style that one cannot offer too much praise for the admirably firm and manly way in which Mr Caine has written this part of his novel.

I have before me as I write two letters written in October 1886. One is from Mr Hall Caine to the late Thomas Edward Brown (of *Fo'c'stle Yarns* fame), *re* the plot and *mise-en-scène* of what afterwards became

The Deemster; and the other is Mr Brown's reply. The letters are too long to reproduce exactly as they stand, but I give here sufficiently important extracts to show the reader what enormous and seemingly insuperable difficulties Mr Caine had to overcome before even beginning the actual writing of the book that brought him fame. Mr Caine's letter is dated 3rd October 1886, from Aberleigh Lodge, Bexley Heath, London.

"DEAR MR BROWN. . . . You must have guessed that I have been constantly prompted by a selfish desire to consult you about my new novel. I am still undecided as to where the scene should be. The difficulty of determining the period is no less serious. . . . I wish to write a romance in the strict sense of the word and to be as nearly as possible untrammelled by facts of history and the like. Your opinion as to the feasibility of the Isle of Man must have been final with me when I had briefly explained my scheme. I remember that your brother Hugh did something to dissuade me from tackling Manxland in any sort of work. He did not think the readers of novels would find the island at all interesting, and he was sure that the local atmosphere was not such as would attract them. I thought over this a good deal, and decided, I must say, against your brother's judgment. . . . In the first place, the island has excellent atmosphere. It has the sea, a fine coast

on the west, fine moorland above; it has traditions, folk-talk, folk-lore, a ballad literature, and no end of superstition,—and all these are very much its own. Such were its attractions for any romance writer, and for me it had the further fascination of being in some sort one's native place, with types of character that had been familiar to me since my earliest years. Moreover, it was unlike the scene in which I had already worked—the dales of Cumberland—and gave me above all one great and new element—the sea. So I decided that even Mudie and his thousands of young ladies might find Manxland an attractive background for a story. . . . The difficulty is whether the Isle of Man is a possible scene for a real epic. You will judge when I sketch very roughly my plot, which is still in a nebulous condition.

"I wish to open with a picture of an island governed mainly by a depraved nobility, or something equivalent to a privileged class. The great man (the Dooney Mooar, is it?) of that class shall be old, anxious (like King Lear) to give up his share in the government, yet kept to his post by restless energy. He shall have lands and be a Hebrew patriarch as to flocks and herds. His wife is long dead, and the memory of her is the one vein of tenderness in a nature that seems to be as hard as granite. He has two sons and a daughter, the former arrived at man's estate, the latter just budding into womanhood. Long ago he had a brother who died at war with him, leaving a widow and an infant son. The lad is now five-and-twenty, a reckless scapegrace, beloved by all children and all dogs, the athlete of the island, physically a magnificent creature, but constantly under the ban of the great man, his kinsman. The

young man is poor, his father having been impoverished. This young fellow should be the central personage of the novel. His youth is sketched; his scrapes, his disgraces, his dubious triumphs come in quick succession. At length he is a man and only less than an outlaw. He and his mother are neglected by the old nobleman (?) and his sons, but the daughter does not repudiate the kinship. The relations of the cousins must be delicately handled. On his side the affection is cousinly. On her side it is imperceptibly deepening into love. . . . The daughter of the great man is a noble creature, educated, too, and great of soul. . . .

"Then comes the time when the great man intends to lay aside his state. His sons shall succeed to him. . . . At this juncture the eldest brother begins to suspect the relations of his sister and cousin. The men meet, quarrel and resolve to fight. . . . It is an unequal match; it is murder; the brother is backed to the cliff edge and . . . tumbles into the sea. . . . Then in an instant the soul of the athlete awakes. He realises what he is, and whither down to that moment his life has tended. In that moment of awakening there is only one thing he can think of doing. He will go to his cousin, the nobleman's daughter. She is his good angel, etc. He goes, and sees her alone at night. He tells her that he has killed her brother—murdered him—extenuates nothing, etc. . . . the woman will be hard to do. What is the part? . . . I hardly know. I think she should drive him from her. But she is his confessor and will not betray him, nevertheless. . . . The man gives himself up to the law. He is tried on his own confession and condemned to death. The death is to be by hanging, but no man has ever suffered death

for crime in that island within memory or record. There is a superstitious dread of hanging. It must not be begun, or where will it end, etc. . . . The criminal is brought out, and . . . the curse is pronounced: that no man shall speak to him, that none shall look his way, that none shall give him food, that if he is sick none shall minister to him, that when he dies no man shall bury him. . . . Then comes a rupture in the state. The people try to cast off the rule of the privileged classes. Bit by bit the outlaw works out his redemption, his slow regeneration, his gradual renewing of the man within. One after one he does the people great services, accepting meantime all his punishment. . . . At length the regeneration is complete, and the outlaw becomes the saviour of his people, and is received in triumph on the scene of his former disgrace. Love is justified, the cousins are united, the broken old man dies, as is most fit.

"Now, dear Mr Brown, all this is very vague; but I shall be curious to hear how far it would be possible to work some such scheme into the (romantic) history of the Isle of Man. The House of Keys was, I think, a self-elected body down to recent years. If I *could* get it into the present century even by any ordinary liberties I should be delighted."

The foregoing is noteworthy not only because it is the first skeleton of *The Deemster*, but because (as will be seen from Mr Brown's reply), there were many difficulties opposing the idea of making the Isle

of Man the *mise-en-scène* for the plot, and because these difficulties were most skilfully overcome. These two letters are one of the most convincing proofs with what extraordinary care and patience Mr Caine works.

The following is Mr Brown's reply.

"CLIFTON, *October* 14, 1886.

"MY DEAR SIR,—Thanks for this admission to the secrets of your workshop. The story is most interesting. . . . It could not possibly be placed in the Isle of Man, nor timed in the nineteenth century.

"The Isle of Man does not give you the remoteness of the place which you want. Norway might, Kamtschatka might! but the Isle of Man—no.

"Then as to time—

"The history of the Isle of Man since the Revestment (1765!) is not legendary, nor has it been otherwise than very clearly defined since the Reformation. It is an eventless history, but quite ascertained, and rigid within its narrow compass. Its constitution has been singularly unbroken; there is not the faintest hint of any such revolution as you postulate. The House of Keys was cooptative in my own time, and the change to the popular method of election was the merest emigration 'from the blue bed to the brown.' The stage is inadequate for your romance; and, moreover, it is quite occupied by the most obstinate fixtures. Your Dooiney (*sic*) Mooar is less than a fable. Where can you get him in? He is not, I suppose, the Earl of Derby, or the Duke of Athol; but, if he is not, he ought to be, for these gentlemen hold the field, and you can't get rid of

them. It is impossible to conceive the privileged class, or nobles, of whom you speak. The fact is, you would take the Isle of Man as the merest physical basis, and constand upon it a whole system of manners, institutions, a social system, in short, which it never knew. It can't be done at the distance; it can't be done at all.

"Now, why not cut away from your socio-politico-revolutionary setting altogether, and rely, as you no doubt desire to do, on the sheer humanities? The Dooiney Mooar need not be a Lear, but he might be an old Manx gentleman; and, instead of resigning a seigniory, he might resign his landed estate. Such a person, and grouped around him nearly all the rest of your story, you could place about the year 1800. The Duke of Athol held a sort of court in those days: he brought over with him to the island a choice assortment of shwash-bucklers, led captains and miscellaneous blackguards. There are some fierce stories about these fellows. Duelling was in vogue.

"It was a very corrupt society, and no doubt greatly demoralised the native population. . . . Bishop Wilson (1710) was an 'epoch-making' personage. The Church and State question was then prominent. He was a complicated man, or at anyrate, a composite one. Never was man more beloved, never was there a serener saint, never a more brutal tyrant. But why seek this sort of person in the Isle of Man? Think of Laud and his tremendous stage. Has anyone ever 'done' him, and the robin coming into his study, and 'all to that'? But yours is a romance? not an unconditional romance though, I suppose? . . .

"But your fiction is splendid; the incidents are quite magnificent, and, from what I can see, the possibilities

of character are highly promising. . . . It must not be thrown away; it is strong and vital; but the Isle of Man sinks beneath it. And besides the inadequacy of the stage there is the fact of its being preoccupied with social and historical furniture that will in no way fit with your invented properties.

"For my part, I think the interest attaching to the 'transition period' idea is adscititious, and rather vapid. And as for an epic—just write the words, 'A Manx Epic and behold the totally impossible at once!

"If you cling to this form, however, take it out to the red men, and let the scene be the Alleghanies, *temp. circiter* 1730. I hope I have made my meaning clear. The story is good, but its setting is impossible. Drop the latter, but stick to the former. If you do, you can retain the Isle of Man as the scene of your action. . . . Most truly yours, T. E. Brown."

He hopes he "has made his meaning clear." Only too terribly clear! Almost every point necessary to the proper development of the plot was promptly knocked on the head; the vital links in the chain were broken, the structural backbone of the romance was destroyed. Ninety-nine men out of a hundred would have given up the idea in despair; but not Hall Caine. He seized on the hint of Bishop Wilson—the "epoch-making" personage; he altered

this part of the plot, and developed that; he substituted one character for another, and introduced new *dramatis personæ;* — in a word, he not only recast the plot, but made it historically convincing, and this in the very face of the warnings and obstacles raised by one of the most erudite scholars the Isle of Man has yet produced. This, of course, involved immense labour, but it was done, and done successfully. Even Mr Brown himself had to acknowledge this. As Mr Caine has written me: "When the book was written there was no such sympathetic reader as T. E. B."

Another eminent writer who generously acknowledged the power and beauty of *The Deemster* was the late R. D. Blackmore, who wrote the following letter immediately after reading Mr Caine's book.

"Teddington, *April* 3, 1888.

"My Dear Mr Caine,—I thank you heartily for your kind and friendly letter, which was a comfort to me. It has always seemed to me that your turn of mind and power of creation are especially dramatic; and that you will write (if once you take to that form) a very grand and moving play. There is no one who can do

that now, so far at least as I can judge; and I shall be proud if I live long enough to see you achieve it.

"For novel-writing you have not yet (according to my small judgment) the sense of proportion and of variety which are needful for pleasant work. I have read with great care your *Deemster*, and have admired and been stirred by it. But to my mind (which is not at all a critical one) there is not the sliding, and the quiet shifting, and the sense of pause, which are perhaps only the mechanical parts of great work, but help to lift it. I cannot exactly express my meaning, and I have no science to second it; and I know that I cannot do the thing myself, and never attempt it consciously. But it will come to you, with time, and give grace to your excelling power.

"As for myself, of which you ask, there is little to say except that all the spirit is taken out of it. I care for nothing that I do; nor whether I do anything—which for a man who has not been lazy is a dreary change of mood; my shame at such a state of mind is useless to improve it, and I wonder how long it will last. But this, I hope, you will never understand, except as I did—before it came to pass.

"If you care to come down to so dull a place, you will be always welcome, but a line beforehand will help it. Tuesdays are my absent days, and Saturdays rather 'throng' with work.—Believe me, ever truly yours,

"R. D. BLACKMORE.

"'Luncheon'—dinner it is to me,—at 2 o'clock daily. Try to come in time for that, and a look-round afterwards."

CHAPTER VI

HALL CAINE AS A DRAMATIST, SHORT-STORY WRITER, POET AND CRITIC

HALL CAINE has writen five plays, three of which have been produced. The drama founded on *The Eternal City* has been played for copyright purposes only. The first of these plays was called *Ben-my-Chree* and was the dramatised version of *The Deemster*. I venture to quote from an excellent biographical article by Mr Robert Harborough Sherard in the *Windsor Magazine* (November 1895): "Irving read the book (*The Deemster*) in America, and seeing that there was here material for a splendid play, with himself in the part of the Bishop, hesitated about cabling to the author. In the meanwhile Wilson Barrett had also read the book, and had telegraphed to Kent to

ask Hall Caine to come up to London to discuss its dramatisation. Hall Caine started, but was forced to leave the train at Derby because a terrible fog rendered travelling impossible. He spent the next ten days in the Isaac Walton Inn at Dovedale, near Derby, waiting for the fog to lift, and whilst so waiting wrote the first draft of the play. Barrett was enthusiastic about it, and *Ben-my-Chree* was duly produced for the first time at the Princess's Theatre on May 14 (the dramatist's birthday), 1888, before a packed house in which every literary celebrity in London was present. It was, however, by no means a great success: for some unaccountable reason, it failed to 'draw,' and after running for a hundred nights, it was withdrawn." Strange to say, it was exceedingly popular in America, and at this moment a company is touring it in the English provinces.

His next drama, *The Manxman*, was also produced by Mr Wilson Barrett in Leeds on August 20, 1894. It was successful everywhere "except in Manchester and

New York." I do not quite understand Mr Caine's statement that *The Manxman* was not a success in Manchester, for I myself remember climbing up on to the top row of the gallery at the Theatre Royal (or was it the Prince's?) because there was no room anywhere else. On that occasion the theatre was crowded, and the reception enthusiastic in every way. Perhaps it was a "return visit" that I witnessed, and the Manchester public had had time to gather its wits and become appreciative.

His third play, *The Christian*, was produced first in Albany, New York, and afterwards in Liverpool. In this play the dramatist's sister, Miss Lily Hall Caine, took the part of Polly Love, and afterwards, when the play was taken on tour, the part of Glory Quayle. This play is still running, and meets with enthusiastic applause wherever it goes. It has been performed in England and the United States more than two thousand times.

In passing any criticism on Mr Caine's plays, it must at the very outset be confessed

that he has not yet done himself justice. For my own part, I have not much faith in the dramatised versions of novels. A plot that lends itself to treatment in the form of a novel is very rarely suitable for production as a drama; and until Hall Caine is inspired with the plot of a drama that is at once cohesive and compact, it seems to me he will never produce anything worthy of the powers which he undoubtedly possesses. Some regard to the unities of Time and Place is necessary before a drama can be considered seriously as a work of art, and it must be acknowledged that Mr Caine pays very little attention to the technique of dramaturgy. I do not for one moment deny that his plays are full of strong and dramatic situations, that the dialogue is natural, easy and telling, and that they are exceedingly well-constructed from a "popular" standard; but as contributions to dramatic literature they cannot be seriously considered. Mr Caine himself would, I feel sure, be the first to agree with me in all this. I know that he does not consider his

dramatic work to be on anything like the same plane as his novel-writing. It is rather a matter of surprise that a writer gifted with so well-developed a dramatic sense should have been comparatively unsuccessful in his plays; but, so far as one can judge, it seems probable that this is due to the fact that he has only attempted plays based on novels. When he shall have developed a plot which obviously lends itself to stage treatment and no other kind of treatment, he may be expected to write a drama which shall take the same position in dramatic literature that his novels have attained in the world of fiction.

In the way of short story writing Mr Caine has done little. A volume entitled *Capt'n Davy's Honeymoon*, containing three tales, is his only output in this direction. Their excellence, and the delicacy of their treatment, make one regret that he has not seen fit to devote more time to this particular branch of his art. *Capt'n Davy's Honeymoon* refutes conclusively all allegations that Mr Caine possesses little or no humour. It is

a Manx tale, full of delicate, beautiful touches that create the right atmosphere at the very outset. The second story in the volume, *The Last Confession*, is situated in Morocco, and in form is based on Rossetti's blank-verse poem of the same name. It is a closely-written piece of work, quietly and soberly worked out, yet powerful and convincing. *The Blind Mother* is the title of the third tale, and consists of a slightly altered episode in his second book, *A Son of Hagar*. I quote the following extracts of the dedication to Mr Bram Stoker:—

> . . . Down to this day our friendship has needed no solder of sweet words to bind it, and I take pleasure in showing by means of this unpretending book that it is founded not only on personal liking and much agreement, but on some wholesome difference and even a little disputation. *The Last Confession* is an attempt to solve a moral problem which we have discussed from opposite poles of sympathy—the absolute value and sanctity of human life, the right to fight, the right to kill, the right to resist evil and to set aside at utmost need the letter of the sixth commandment. *The Blind Mother* is a somewhat altered version of an episode in an early romance, and it is presented afresh, with every apology, because you with another friend, Theodore Watts, consider it the only worthy part of an un-

worthy book, and also because it appears to be at all points a companion to the story that goes before it. Of *Capt'n Davy's Honeymoon*, I might perhaps say that it is the complement of the other two—all three being stories of great and consuming love, father's, mother's and husband's—but I prefer to confess that I publish it because I know if anyone should smile at my rough Manx comrade, doubting if such a man is in nature and not found among men, I can always answer him and say, "Ah, then, I am richer than you are by one friend at least,—Capt'n Davy without his ruggedness and without his folly, but with his simplicity, his unselfishness and his honour—Bram Stoker!"

A charming dedication, is it not? and interesting as a revelation of the motives which inspired the only three short stories we have from his pen. *The Last Confession* and *The Blind Mother* were issued in America under the title of the former. It is extremely unlikely that Mr Caine will ever return to the short story as a means of expressing himself; the form is of too limited a scope, and of too ephemeral a nature. A story entitled *Jan, the Icelander*, recently appeared in one of the weekly papers; but it was originally prepared by Mr Caine as a dramatic dialogue which, on one or two occasions, he recited in public.

As a poet, Mr Hall Caine has a great claim to our admiration. It is true, he has published no poetry in volume form, and little enough in the magazines, but what has appeared is of undoubted beauty. I am able to give here two sonnets which originally appeared in the *Academy* in the early eighties. Then, as now, the *Academy* and the *Athenæum* were the two foremost literary papers in the kingdom, and at this time Mr Caine was a critic on the permanent staff of both papers. It will be seen that both sonnets reveal a deep and unusual love of Nature; and it seems to me that that entitled *Before Sunrise on Helvellyn* ranks with the very best sonnets of Wordsworth. Besides its intrinsic beauty, it contains that "fundamental brain-work" which many critics hold to be an essential of a fine sonnet, although Mr Caine's own criticism is that "it is wanting in the first quality of poetic style—flexibility."

BEFORE SUNRISE ON HELVELLYN

Over the peaks of huge crags uncreate,
Across the stricken stars' usurped demesne,

Through mutinous vapours to her realms terrene—
Behold she comes, the morn inviolate.
Girdled with fire, radiant of face, elate,
Leaping the lit waves of the steep ravine—
Here first since eldest time the earth hath seen
Her vesture's trail, in heaven articulate.

Say not the world grows old: Behold ere long
Forth from the mountains come the swift and strong
Who scale the heights to greet the deathless day;
And in the abysmal plains the sick and sore
Following their feet shall see the imminent grey
Glad dawn has never breathed o'er earth or shore.

This was published in the *Academy* of January 28, 1882; the following was published in the same paper on May 12, 1881, whilst Mr Caine was still in his twenty-eighth year.

WHERE LIES THE LAND?—(*Wordsworth*)

'Where lies the land of which thy soul would know?'
Beyond the wearied wold, the songless dell,
The purple grape and golden asphodel,
Beyond the zone where streams baptismal flow.
'Where lies the land to which thy soul would go?'
There where the unvexed senses darkling dwell,
Where never haunting, hurrying footfall fell,
Where toil is not, nor builded hope laid low.

Rest! Rest! to thy hushed realm how one by one
Old Earth's tired ages steal away and weep,
Forgotten or unknown, long duty done.
Ah, God! when death in seeming peace shall steep
Life's loud turmoil, and Time his race hath run—
Shall heart of man at length find rest and sleep?

Other sonnets appeared at about the same time, particularly noticeable among which are three to Byron, Keats and Rossetti respectively.

But though poetry was Hall Caine's natural means of expression, and to be a poet his earliest ambition, yet in his youth he recognised the fact that in order to reach a large public some other medium than verse was necessary. So poetry was more or less reluctantly abandoned, and fiction soon took its place.

As a critic, Mr Caine would undoubtedly have won a foremost place among the *littérateurs* of our time if he had devoted his whole life to that particular branch of his art; but soon after his thirtieth year professional criticism was abandoned in his absorption in novel-writing. From his earliest years the young student was a critic.

He eagerly discussed every book he read with his friends and acquaintances, and his first contributions to the Press were in the form of literary criticism. When Lord Houghton first saw Caine as a very young man, he prophesied for him a great future as a critic, and there can be no doubt that his powers in this direction are altogether exceptional. I have read a large amount of criticism which he contributed to the *Academy* and *Athenæum* in the early eighties, and I was struck not only by the mature judgment and catholic taste displayed therein, but also by the ease and fluency with which he expressed his views. Those were the days of signed articles, and the curious reader may turn up for himself the back numbers of these two great literary papers and read those articles signed "T. Hall Caine." He will find in them much to surprise him, for most of them are truly remarkable as the product of so youthful a writer.

Mr Caine was particularly fortunate in obtaining a place on the *Academy* staff. A

complete stranger to Mr J. S. Cotton (at that time the editor of this paper), he called on him and asked for employment. "Certainly!" replied Mr Cotton, much to the young man's confusion, for he had by no means expected so enthusiastic a reception. The acquaintance made in this way soon deepened to a warm friendship which is to-day valued by both men as much as it was twenty years ago.

CHAPTER VII

THE BONDMAN

The Bondman is a lurid picture of conflicting passions. Love, of an intense sadness, is set against hate and mischance. The strength of the story and the powerfulness of its narration lay hold of the reader's imagination with a shudder, like a grim masterpiece of Rembrandt. Here is an extract from the opening book—Rachel, the Governor's daughter, has left her home under the curse of her father, to marry a peasant Icelander, a good-for-nothing. Supported by his mother, they live on the brink of starvation. At last the husband, in shame, complains that if he had sixty crowns he would buy a fishing-boat; and Rachel sells her beautiful hair to procure the money, handing it over to him to make the purchase.

The old woman sat by the hearth and smoked. Rachel waited with fear at her heart, but the hours went by and still Stephen did not appear. The old woman dozed before the fire and snored. At length, when the night had worn on towards midnight, an unsteady step came to the door, and Stephen reeled into the house drunk. The old woman awoke and laughed.

Rachel grew faint and sank to a seat. Stephen dropped to his knees on the ground before her, and in a maudlin cry went on to tell of how he had thought to make one hundred crowns of her sixty by a wager, how he had lost fifty, and then in a fit of despair had spent the other ten.

"Then all is gone—all," cried Rachel. And thereupon the old woman shuffled to her feet and said bitterly, "And a good thing too. I know you—trust me for seeing through your sly ways, my lady. You expected to take my son from me with the price of your ginger hair, you ugly bald-pate."

Rachel's head grew light, and with the cry of a baited creature she turned upon the old mother in a torrent of hot words. "You low, mean, selfish soul," she cried, "I despise you more than the dirt under my feet."

Worse than this she said, and the old woman called on Stephen to hearken to her, for that was the wife he had brought home to revile his mother.

The old witch shed some crocodile tears, and Stephen lunged in between the women and with the back of his hand struck his wife across the face.

At that blow Rachel was silent for a moment, and then she turned upon her husband. "And so you have

struck me—me—me," she cried. "Have you forgotten the death of Patriksen?"

The blow of her words was harder than the blow of her husband's hand. The man reeled before it, turned white, gasped for breath, then caught up his cap and fled out into the night.

Stephen never comes back, and the son born to Rachel is christened Jason and is the "Bondman" of the tale. He is brought up by his mother in one of the meanest huts in the fishing quarter of the Icelandic capital, and supported by her drudgery. After nineteen years of flickering belief in her husband's return, she comes by the knowledge that he is indeed living, but with another wife and another son, in the Island of Man. Broken-hearted and worn-out with hard living, Rachel sinks to her death, and, with her cold hand in his, Jason swears the oath that forms the motive of the book.

"My father has killed my mother."

"No, no, don't say that," said the priest.

"Yes, yes," said the lad more loudly; "not in a day, or an hour, or a moment, but in twenty long years."

"Hush, hush, my son," the old priest murmured.

But Jason did not hear him. "Now listen," he cried, "and hear my vow." And still he held the cold hand in his, and still the ashy face rested on them.

"I will hunt the world over until I find that man, and when I have found him I will slay him."

"What are you saying?" cried the priest.

But Jason went on with an awful solemnity. "If he should die, and we should never meet, I will hunt the world over until I find his son, and when I have found him, I will kill him for his father's sake."

"Silence, silence," cried the priest.

"So help me, God!" said Jason.

Stephen Orry, on leaving his wife, has left Iceland as seaman in an English ship, and deserted from it on touching the Isle of Man. There he finds a companion in "the slattern and drab of the island," and though vaguely ashamed of her, marries her. Michael, "little Sunlocks," is the offspring of this unhappy union, a union becoming more degrading and more horrible to Stephen with every year of the child's life. The father's tortured brain, after trying every other means within his knowledge, resolves to kill his son rather than leave him to grow up under the influence of such a mother, and

with that purpose he takes the child out to sea in his little boat. This passage is one of most beautiful that Hall Caine has yet written.

Little Sunlocks had never been out in the boat before and everything was a wonder and delight to him.

"You said you would take me on the water some day. Didn't you, father?"

"Yes, little Sunlocks, yes."

It was evening, and the sun was sinking behind the land, very large and red in its setting.

"Do the sun fall down eve'y day, father?"

"It sets, little Sunlocks, it sets."

"What is sets?"

"Dies."

"Oh!"

The waters lay asleep under the soft red glow, and over them the sea-fowl were sailing.

"Why are the white birds sc'eaming?"

"Maybe they're calling their young, little Sunlocks."

It was late spring, and on the headland the sheep were bleating.

"Look at the baby one—away, away up yonder. What's it doing there by itself on the 'ock, and c'ying, and c'ying, and c'ying?"

"Maybe it's lost, little Sunlocks."

"Then why doesn't somebody go and tell its father?"

And the innocent face was full of trouble.

The sun went down, the twilight deepened, the air grew chill, the water black, and Stephen was still pulling round the head.

"Father, where does the night go when we are asleep?"

"To the other world, little Sunlocks."

"Oh, I know—heaven."

Stephen stripped off his guernsey and wrapped it about the child. His eyes shone brightly, his mouth was parched, but he did not flinch. All thoughts, save one thought, had faded from his view.

.

But no, he could not look into the child's eyes and do it. The little one would sleep soon, and then it would be easier done. So he took him in his arms and wrapped him in a piece of sailcloth.

"Shut your eyes and sleep, little Sunlocks."

"I'm not s'eepy, I'm not."

Yet soon the little lids fell, opened again and fell once more, and then suddenly the child started up.

"But I haven't said my p'ayers."

"Say them now, little Sunlocks."

Then lisping the simple words of the old Icelandic prayer, the child's voice, drowsy and slow, floated away over the silent water:—

"'S'eeping or waking, verily we
To God alone belong;
As darkness walks, and shadows flee,
We sing our even-song.'"

"There's another verse, little Sunlocks—another verse."

"'O Father, we are Thy children all,
Thy little children, so weak and small.
Let angels keep
Guard of our s'eep,
And till we wake our spi'its take,
Eternal God, for Ch'ist His sake.'"

He finds it impossible to murder the innocent little one, and returns home to find his wife dead.

Then he decides to give the child away, never doubting but that the sunshine of his broken life would be an acceptable present to anyone. The Deputy-Governor, a man of great benevolence and generosity, is his choice; and the Governor accepts the trust, thereby estranging his wife and his own six sons. Adam Fairbrother, the Deputy-Governor, has a daughter of Michael's age, and until little Greeba goes away to be brought up in the household of the Duke of Athol, the two children live and play together. Michael grows up to be his foster-father's right hand, and the jealousy of the six sons and their mother cause a rupture in the family, the mother and sons taking the gift of all Adam's private property and going away to live on it. At the age of eighteen, Greeba returns from London, and at the same time Stephen Orry reappears. He has gathered together two hundred pounds, and with it he asks that Michael shall go to

Iceland, there to search out Rachel and her child and succour them from the poverty-stricken life in which Stephen had left them, so long before. Michael refuses the money, but accepts the charge, and takes ship for Iceland on the very day that Jason, in pursuance of his vow, reaches the Isle of Man.

Jason lands on the island, only to rescue his father from drowning and watch over him as he dies. He takes up life with Adam Fairbrother's sons, and for four years grows in love for Greeba and her father. Then the office of Deputy-Governor is taken from Adam; and turning for home to his wife, in the house that he had given her, is refused admission. He remembers Michael Sunlocks, and determines to go to him in Iceland, leaving Greeba to live with her mother, and the love of none but Jason. The mother dies and the sons treat Greeba very hardly, so that she accepts the love of Jason. Then comes a letter from Michael which fans into flame the embers of her love. He writes to her, tells her of his position,

and asks her to come out to him to be his wife. In a scene which shows the height of Jason's nobility, Greeba takes back her love.

"It is no fault of yours, but now I know I do not love you."

He turned his face away from her, and when he spoke again his voice broke in his throat.

"You could never think how fast and close my love will grow. Let us wait," he said.

"It would be useless," she answered.

"Stay," he said stiffly, "do you love anyone else?"

But before she had time to speak he said quickly, "Wait! I've no right to ask that question, and I will not hear you answer it."

"You are very noble, Jason," she said.

"I was thinking of myself," he said.

"Jason," she cried, "I meant to ask you to release me, but you have put me to shame, and now I ask you to choose for me. I have promised myself to you, and if you wish it I will keep my promise."

At that he stood, a sorrowful man, beside her for a moment's space before he answered her, and only the tones of his voice could tell how much his answer cost him.

"No—ah, no," he said; "no, Greeba, to keep your promise to me would be too cruel to you."

"Think of yourself now," she cried.

"There's no need to do that," he said, "for either way I am a broken man. But you shall not also be

broken-hearted, and neither shall the man who parts us."

Saying this, a ghastly white hand seemed to sweep across his face, but at the next moment he smiled feebly and said, "God bless you both."

Greeba goes to Michael and Iceland, and Jason, remembering his vow, follows her. A succession of events have made Sunlocks the Governor of Iceland, for its short-lived Republic. Knowing that the man he is in search of is the Governor, Jason now finds that the Governor is Michael Sunlocks. Beside himself with the knowledge of all the man has unconsciously stolen from him, Jason dogs him with intent to kill, but, being discovered by Greeba, is denounced by her and sentenced to penal servitude in the sulphur-mines.

The six sons of Adam Fairbrother, discovering the purpose of Greeba's flight from their home, decide that in brotherliness they will go to her and share her prosperity. Failing in their purpose, they successfully attempt to poison Michael's mind against her, telling him that Greeba

had loved Jason at the time that she had left the Isle of Man. Michael, in his revulsion of feeling, determines to take from Greeba the position for the sake of which he believes her to have married, and summons the *Althing* in order to resign his office of Governor. While the meeting is in progress, the doors of the Senate House are locked, and the building surrounded by Danish soldiers. The Republic is overthrown, and Michael Sunlocks, as a political prisoner, is sent to the mines.

Thus the most touching and at the same time the most terrible part of the story is reached. Touching because of the great love that grows up in Jason's heart for Sunlocks, his bondfellow; terrible, because of the fiendish inhumanities of Michael's lot. This is the description of the place of torment.

It was a grim wilderness of awful things, not cold and dead and dumb like the rest of that haggard land, but hot and alive with inhuman fire and clamorous with devilish noises. A wide ashen plain within a circle of hills whereon little snow could rest for the furnace

that raged beneath the surface; shooting with shrill whistles in shafts of hot steam from a hundred fumeroles; bubbling up in a thousand jets of boiling water; hissing from a score of green cauldrons; grumbling low with mournful sounds underneath, like the voice of subterranean wind, and sending up a noxious stench through heavy whorls of vapour that rolled in a fetid atmosphere overhead. Oh, it was a fearsome place, like nothing on God's earth but a mouldering wreck of human body, vast and shapeless, and pierced deep with foulest ulcers; a leper spot on earth's face; a seething vat full of broth of hell's own brewing. And all around was the peaceful snow, and beyond the line of the southern hills was the tranquil sea, and within the northern mountains was a quiet lake of water as green as the grass of spring.

Spurred by the cruel treatment of Sunlocks, Jason breaks away, carrying on his shoulders the half-insensible body of his now blind and maimed companion. They manage to reach the valley of Thingvellir, where the biennial of *Althing* is taking place, and there, as the custom allows, Jason demands justice and freedom. It is granted to him as a criminal of Iceland, but denied to Sunlocks as a Danish prisoner; and Sunlocks is therefore sent in his helpless, blind condition to the

custody of a priest on an outstanding island. There Greeba, who has followed him in his wanderings, takes domestic service with the priest, that she may tend Michael and win back his love, and there Jason comes, to lay down his life for his friend after effecting his escape.

Thus ends one of the most powerful novels ever written, great by reason of its strength of thought and directness of utterance. And yet, here and there in its pages, are passages of wonderful softness, tender pictures of the consolation of childhood—little Sunlocks, little Greeba, and the little child Michael. This is what we grow to look for in Hall Caine, the tenderness and the tragedy of humanity. They form the strength of his novels, and it is they that will make them live through the ages, based as they are on truths and passions that are old as the world is old.

The publication of *The Bondman* established, once and for all, Hall Caine's claims to genius; it confirmed the impression created by *The Deemster*, and there was

hardly one dissentient voice in the verdict of the critics who proclaimed it as one of the masterpieces of the century. The late T. E. Brown wrote the following letter to Mr Caine immediately after reading *The Bondman.*

"CLIFTON, *February* 1890.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I have sent a review of *The Bondman* to the *Scots Observer* by same post; and I hope that it will appear in next Saturday's issue.

"A thousand thanks for the work sent to me by Heinemann. How splendidly he has done it! I am reading it again with fresh interest and admiration. Nor is it otherwise than pleasant to me to find in your story some trail of what I must suppose is old inveterate Manxness. How curious that you should have preserved echoes, however faint, of your father's talk! But why *curious?* Still you will agree with me that they ought to be ruthlessly (!) extirpated. They turn up in your English, not in your Anglo-Manx. I give an instance—after the verb *threaten* an inversion as with interrogations, *e.g.*, 'He threatened what would he do to them.' Let me give that in your ear with full Manx flavour, and you will feel yourself standing very close to the Lob-y-Valley. But even without the flavouring, you perceive that it is Manx, though it may be a rusticity common to many parts of the country.

"Trailing behind her these insignificant appendages, your book floats forth to certain success, a magnificent craft, fit for deep waters and the large horizon. Good

luck to her! Kindest regards to Mrs Caine and Ralphie, in which my daughters cordially unite.—
Ever yours, T. E. BROWN."

This letter is but one out of many hundreds received by Mr Caine from all parts of the world, congratulating him on his success. The dramatic tension, so admirably sustained throughout every page of the book, took the literary world by storm, and the sale of the book to-day, eleven years after publication, is extremely large.

The Bondman was written with Mr Caine's usual care. With his wife and child he paid a two months' visit to Iceland, there to gather material and local colour for his book. It was begun in March 1889, at Aberleigh Lodge, Bexley Heath, Kent, and was finished in October of the same year at Castlerigg Cottage, Keswick. Always greatly attracted by Cumberland, Mr Caine had now settled down there permanently; it was not until a few years afterwards that he made his home in the Isle of Man.

Later in this year Sir Henry Irving commissioned him to write a drama with Mahomet as the central character. The subject fascinated him, and in a short time he was immersed in the study of Mahomet, his life and his times. Three acts were written in a fever of enthusiasm; and then came a great disappointment. The almighty British Public, hearing of Mr Caine's work, took upon itself to be shocked, and, growing tired of silent indignation, raised its voice in alarm, and protested vehemently. The Press took up the cry and pointed out that British Mohammedans would certainly be offended. Sir Henry took alarm, and telegraphed to Mr Caine that the idea could not be carried out. But the dramatist was heart and soul in his work, and only spared the time to write a vehement article in *The Speaker*, pointing out that his critics were too hasty, before he went on with the writing of his play and finished it. Irving, of course, was as much annoyed as Mr Caine, and offered the latter a substantial

sum to recompense him for the trouble he had taken; Mr Caine, however, refused to accept a penny, and offered his play to Willard for production in America. It was at once accepted, but has not yet been put on the boards.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SCAPEGOAT

ALTHOUGH in comparison with *The Bondman*, *The Deemster* or *The Manxman*, *The Scapegoat* is not a masterpiece, yet it is in no sense a failure, or derogatory to the gifted hand that wrote it. Written next in order after *The Bondman*, *The Scapegoat* seems to be an aftermath of that, one of the three greatest works, in our opinion, of Hall Caine. It is bitter without much sweetness, and it draws out its long note of human woe without one cheering ray. Tenderness and hope are indeed present, and they are the avenues through which the writer approaches his story, and the means whereby he enchains the hearts of his readers, gladdening and strengthening their souls by his own fervency of belief. Hall Caine has a

wonderful power of creating atmosphere. In this novel of *The Scapegoat*, we tread the tortuous streets of a Morocco town, we think in the inflated metaphors of its inhabitants, we brush against the varied costumes that denote their myriad nationalities. We feel religious antagonism to be a race-element, Oriental cunning and cruelty matters of course; and we read of the Spaniards as though they were to us a strange people from a far-off continent, so thoroughly has the writer imbibed the spirit of his tale.

Israel ben Oliel is a man hardened by circumstance. He is a Jew whose father married for gain and knew no paternal tenderness. Brought up in England, Israel returns to his native country, Morocco, on the death of his father, and takes the post of assessor of tributes for the Kaid of Tetuan. His calling, though pursued at the first with justice, makes him to be hated by the over-taxed people, and on his marriage with the daughter of the grand Rabbi, they gather before the house to curse

and prophesy evil. Ben Oliel and his wife, Ruth, take up their worse than lonely life in Israel's house in the Jewish quarter. For long they have no child and are held in derision by the Jews their neighbours; but after the space of three years their prayers are answered, and on the birth-night of the child, Israel prepares a feast and invites his enemies that he may triumph over them.

Israel . . . leapt up from the table and faced full upon his guests, and cried, "Now you know what it is; and now you know why you are bidden to this supper! You are here to rejoice with me over my enemies! Drink! drink! Confusion to all of them!" And he lifted a winecup and drank himself.

They were abashed before him, and tried to edge out of the patio into the street; but he put his back to the passage, and faced them again.

"You will not drink?" he said. "Then listen to me." He dashed the winecup out of his hand and it broke into fragments on the floor. His laughter was gone, his face was aflame, and his voice rose to a shrill cry. "You foretold the doom of God upon me, you brought me low, you made me ashamed: but behold how the Lord has lifted me up! You set your women to prophesy that God would not suffer me to raise up children to be a reproach and a curse among my people; but God has this day given me a son like the best of

you. More than that—more than that—my son shall yet see—"

The slave woman was touching his arm. "It is a girl," she said; "a girl!"

For a moment Israel stammered and paused. Then he cried, "No matter! She shall see your own children fatherless, and with none to show them mercy! She shall see the iniquity of their fathers remembered against them! She shall see them beg their bread, and seek it in desolate places! And now you can go! Go! go!"

He had stepped aside as he spoke, and with a sweep of his arm he was driving them all out like sheep before him, dumfounded and with their eyes in the dust, when suddenly there was a low cry from the inner room.

It was Ruth calling for her husband. Israel wheeled about and went in to her hurriedly, and his enemies, by one impulse of evil instinct, followed him and listened from the threshold.

Ruth's face was a face of fear, and her lips moved, but no voice came from them.

And Israel said, "How is it with you, my dearest, joy of my joy and pride of my pride?"

Then Ruth lifted the babe from her bosom and said, "The Lord has counted my prayer to me as sin—look, see; the child is both dumb and blind!"

Israel sinks yet deeper in the contempt of his countrymen because of what seems to them a manifest judgment of God. And he, knowing his condemnation to be unjust, is soured by the knowledge, and, in rebellion

against God and man, changes his hitherto upright dealings, becoming in very deed a persecutor of the people. Meanwhile he has taken into his household a little negro waif as a companion for his stricken child Naomi. He grows up to be the devoted follower of Israel in his adversities. When Naomi has reached her seventh year, her mother dies, and is buried in the Jewish cemetery by six State prisoners from the jail, for none other in his isolation can Israel find to help him. He returns to his orphaned child and wraps around her all his thought, all his tenderness. Nightly he reads to her from the *Koran*, doing his best to dispel the terrible fear that she, knowing nothing of God, may stand condemned in the next life; for in a vision of the night, he has seen Naomi going out into the wilderness as the scapegoat for his sins. So seven more years pass and Israel's heart softens towards the people under him, and he begins to hate the tyrannies that are exercised over them. And in the disturbance of his heart he takes a journey out to where the prophet

Mohammed of Mequinez, a man who has given up all to the cause of the poor and afflicted, holds his camp of refugees. The prophet tells him: "Exact no more than is just; do violence to no man; accuse none falsely; part with your riches and give to the poor:" and with the hope in his heart that such sacrifice will turn God's face towards Naomi, Israel returns home on foot, giving away all that he carries with him except that which his necessities require. He reaches home in tattered Moorish clothing which at first prevents his recognition.

Then Ali knew him and cried, "God save us! What has happened?"

"What has happened here?" said Israel. "Naomi," he faltered, "what of her?"

"Then you have heard?" said Ali. "Thank God, she is now well." Israel laughed—his laugh was like a scream.

"More than that—a strange thing has befallen her since you went away," said Ali.

"What?"

"She can hear."

"It's a lie!" cried Israel, and he raised his hand and struck Ali to the floor. But at the next minute he was lifting him up and sobbing and saying, "Forgive me, my

brave boy. I was mad, my son; I did not know what I was doing. But do not torture me. If what you tell me is true, there is no man so happy under heaven; but if it is false, there is no fiend in hell need envy me."

And Ali answered through his tears, "It is true, my father—come and see."

Naomi has gained her hearing in an illness, and it is with suffering that she learns to bear sound. It is long before she can speak. Israel has sorrowed at her suffering and almost reproached God with her dumbness. A plague of locusts is eating up everything off the face of the land. The Jews in vain beseech the Almighty to send His floods, and then turn their thoughts to the sinner among them whom they believe to be drawing down God's wrath on their nation. They select Israel and assemble with the purpose of putting him to death. Walking in the town he stumbles across the people who are crowded together expecting him.

With a loud shout, as if it had been a shout out of one great throat, the crowd encompassed Israel, crying, "Kill him!" Israel stopped, and lifted his heavy face

upon the people; but neither did he cry out nor make any struggle for his life. He stood erect and silent in their midst, and massive and square. His brave bearing did not break their fury. They fell upon him, a hundred hands together. One struck at his face, another tore at his long grey hair, and a third thrust him down on to his knees.

No one had yet observed on the outer rim of the crowd the pale slight girl that stood there—blind, dumb, powerless, frail, and so softly beautiful—a waif on the margin of a tempestuous sea. Through the thick barriers of Naomi's senses everything was coming to her ugly and terrible. Her father was there! They were tearing him to pieces!

Suddenly she was gone from the side of the two black women. Like a flash of light she had passed through the bellowing throng. She had thrust herself between the people and her father, who was on the ground: she was standing over him with both arms upraised, and at that instant God loosed her tongue, for she was crying, "Mercy! Mercy!"

Then the crowd fell back in great fear. The dumb had spoken. No man dared to touch Israel any more. The hands that had been lifted against him dropped back useless, and a wide circle formed around him. In the midst of it stood Naomi. Her blind face quivered; see seemed to glow like a spirit. And like a spirit she had driven back the people from their deed of blood as with the voice of God—she, the blind, the frail, the helpless.

Israel rose to his feet, for no man touched him again, and the procession of judges, which had now come up, was silent. And, seeing how it was that in the hour of

his great need the gift of speech had come upon Naomi, his heart rose big within him, and he tried to triumph over his enemies, and say, "You thought God's arm was against me, but behold how God has saved me out of your hands."

But he could not speak. The dumbness that had fallen from his daughter seemed to have dropped upon him.

At that moment Naomi turned to him and said, "Father!"

Then the cup of Israel's heart was full. His throat choked him. So he took her by the hand in silence, and down a long alley of the people they passed through the Mellah gate and went home to their house. Her eyes were to the earth, and she wept as she walked; but his face was lifted up, and his tears and his blood ran down his cheeks together.

Naomi can now speak, and Israel's world is a happier one. Issuing from his house in the night time, he goes into the poorest quarters of the town on errands of mercy, and soon in his liberality becomes a poor man. The people, seeing his poverty, account for it by the supposition that he must be falling from the Kaid's favour, and curse and jeer at him all the more openly. From secret charity, Israel determines to renounce his position as servant of the

wicked Kaid, and waits upon him to deliver up the seal of office. The Kaid receives him at first with suspicion, then with contempt, finally with insult. The wife of the Kaid strikes Israel with her fan.

In the blank stupor of the moment, every eye being on the two that stood in the midst, no one had observed until then that another had entered the patio. It was Naomi. How long she had been there no one knew, and how she had come unnoticed through the corridors out of the streets scarce anyone — even when time sufficed to arrange the scattered thoughts of the Makhazni, the guard at the gate—could clearly tell. She stood under the arch, with one hand at her breast, which heaved visibly with emotion, and the other hand stretched out to touch the open iron-clamped door, as if for help and guidance. Her head was held up, her lips were apart, and her motionless blind eyes seemed to stare wildly. She had heard the hot words. She had heard the sound of the blow that followed them. Her father was smitten! Her father! Her father! It was then that she uttered the cry. All eyes turned to her. Quaking, reeling, almost falling, she came tottering down the patio. Soul and sense seemed to be struggling together in her blind face. What did it all mean? What was happening? Her fixed eyes stared as if they must burst the bonds that bound them, and look, and see, and know!

At that moment God wrought a mighty work, a wondrous change, such as He had brought to pass but

twice or thrice since men were born blind into His world of light. In an instant, at a thought, by one spontaneous flash, as if the spirit of the girl tore down the dark curtains which had hung for seventeen years over the windows of her eyes, Naomi saw!

Katrina, the Kaid's wife, pretends to see in this nothing but imposture. Telling her husband that Naomi's defects have been assumed, she imparts her own rage to him, and he sentences both Israel and his daughter to be put out of the town.

"Guards, take both of them. Set the man on an ass, and let the girl walk barefoot before him; and let a crier cry beside them: 'So shall it be done to every man who is an enemy of the Kaid, and to every woman who is a play-actor and a cheat!' Thus let them pass through the streets and through the people until they are come to a gate of the town, and then cast them forth from it like lepers and like dogs!"

In the now driving rain Naomi and Israel are thus paraded in the streets, and all the townsfolk mass themselves to follow in a huge, howling, jeering procession. Naomi walks with closed eyes, not being able to bear the light, and for several days she seeks shade and darkness, almost in terror.

Once out of the town, they find people who are kind to them, giving them food and garments; and they settle in a hut among their new-found friends. Israel's little remaining money is expended on a few sheep and oxen, and a living is found from the sale of wool, butter and milk, which they send into the town with the neighbours' market produce. They live in happiness for some months until a crushing blow falls. One of Israel's last acts of mercy while in office was to liberate a number of prisoners. The knowledge of this has now come to the Kaid's ears, and he orders the arrest of Ben Oliel. Israel is hurried away to a distant prison, and Naomi is left alone, a child in knowledge both of the world and of the dangerous people around her. The thought of the evil that may come to her preys upon Israel's mind in his helplessness, and gradually reduces him to insanity. His comrades, in their sympathy, do all they can to arouse him, and fresh prisoners as they arrive tell of the Kaid's tyrannies, and of how the people of Tetuan regret their treatment of

Israel, wishing him back among them. The kindly efforts are useless, until the wit of the prison tells a harrowing tale in the hope of bringing Israel to tears.

That same night, when darkness fell over the dark place, and the prisoners tied up their cotton handkerchiefs and lay down to sleep, Tarby sat beside Israel's place with sighs and moans and other symptoms of a dejected air.

"Sidi, master," he faltered, "I had a little brother once, and he was blind. Born blind, Sidi, my own mother's son. But you wouldn't think how happy he was for all that? You see, Sidi, he never missed anything, and so his little face was like laughing water! By Allah! I loved that boy better than all the world! Women? Why—well, never mind! He was six and I was eighteen, and he used to ride on my back! Black curls all over, Sidi, and big white eyes that looked at you for all they couldn't see. Well, a bleeder came from Soos—curse his great-grandfather! Looked at little Hosain—'Scales!' said he—burn his father! 'Bleed him and he'll see!' So they bled him, and he did see. By Allah! yes, for a minute—half a minute! 'Oh, Tarby,' he cried—I was holding him; then he—he—'Tarby,' he cried faint, like a lamb that's lost in the mountains—and then—and then—'Oh, oh, Tarby,' he moaned. Sidi, Sidi, I *paid* that bleeder—there and then—*this* way! That's why I'm here!"

It was a lie, but Tarby acted it so well that his voice broke in his throat, and great drops fell from his eyes on to Israel's hand.

Tarby is successful, and with his tears the old man's madness leaves him. Hardly has he regained his sanity when the order comes for his release, and Israel in joy and thankfulness hurries away to rejoin his child.

In the meanwhile, much has befallen Naomi. At first she clings to her lonely hut, refusing the neighbours' hospitality; but little by little she gathers from their talk some idea of what her father's life in prison must be, and finally determines to follow the custom expected from prisoners' friends and relatives, in carrying food to him. She sets out with a pannier of loaves and another of eggs on either side of her borrowed mule, paying no heed to the expostulations of the good people around her. But as her journey progresses her heart begins to sink. Knowing nothing of evil, and expecting friendliness from all men, she is disheartened by the knowledge that now forces itself upon her, and as, by theft, and in payment for her lodging, her stock of food dimishes, she almost resolves to turn back. By this time she has reached Tetuan, and close to the town gates she is

met and recognised by a former servant of Israel.

The two might have passed unknown, for Habeebah was veiled, but that Naomi had forgotten her blanket and was uncovered. In another moment the poor frightened girl, with all her brave bearing gone, was weeping on the black woman's breast.

"Whither are you going?" said Habeebah.

"To my father," Naomi began. "He is in prison; they say he is starving; I was taking food to him, but I am lost, I don't know my way, and besides—"

"The very thing!" cried Habeebah.

Habeebah had her own little scheme. It was meant to win emancipation at the hands of her master, and paradise for her soul when she died. Naomi, who was a Jewess, was to turn Muslima. That was all. Then her troubles would end, and wondrous fortune would descend upon her, and her father who was in prison would be set free.

Now, religion was nothing to Naomi; she hardly understood what it meant. The differences of faith were less than nothing, but her father was everything, and so she clutched at Hebeebah's bold promises like a drowning soul at the froth of a breaker.

"My father will be let out of prison? You are sure—quite sure?" she asked.

"Quite sure," answered Habeebah stoutly.

Naomi's hopes of ever reaching her father were now faint, and her poor little stock of eggs and bread looked like folly to her new-born worldliness.

"Very well," she said. "I will turn Muslima."

The two go together to the Kaid, who, seeing Naomi's beauty, resolves to ward off the threatened displeasure of the Sultan by making a gift of her at the coming royal feast. But in the interim, Naomi's former nurse has found her and told her, that to embrace Mahometanism would mean separation from her father. The girl halts long in her distress. She is sent to the harem, and from the harem to the prison. She is given her choice of Mahometanism or death, and is finally overborne by the Jews of Tetuan, who, coming to her prison bars, entreat her to renounce her religion.

That night the place under the narrow window in the dark lane was occupied by a group of Jews. "Sister," they whispered, "sister of our people, listen. The Basha is a hard man. This day he has robbed us of all we had that he may pay for the Sultan's visit. Listen! We have heard something. We want Israel ben Oliel back among us. He was our father, he was our brother. Save his life for the sake of our children, for the Basha has taken their bread. Save him, sister, we beg, we entreat, we pray."

Thus it comes to pass that Israel is released from prison, and hastens in his

ignorance to the place where he had left Naomi, only to find it empty. He is told that she is in the women's apartments at the Kaid's palace, and the news breaks down his reason; he stays, in the childishness of insanity, in the home of his former happiness.

The Sultan enters Tetuan amid much outward pomp, but there is an undercurrent of treachery. A rumour of the coming of the Mahdi, Mohammed of Mequinez, is in the air, and beneath that, a feeling of something more—of the revolt which shall abet the Spaniards in their expected siege of the town. The Mahdi comes, and demands the freedom of Naomi, but without success. Leaving the palace, he decides to follow the plan at which he had before hesitated, the plan of co-operation with the Spaniards. This plot has been contrived by Ali, the boy whom Israel had trained from childhood; and he has gained the promise of support from all the principal townspeople.

Ali's stout heart stuck at nothing. He was for

having the Spaniards brought up to the gates of the town on the very night when the whole majesty and iniquity of Barbary would be gathered in one room; then, locking the entire kennel of dogs in the banqueting hall, firing the Kasbah and burning it to the ground, with all the Moorish tyrants inside of it like rats in a trap.

One danger attended this bold adventure, for Naomi's person was within the Kasbah walls. To meet this peril Ali was himself to find his way into the dungeon, deliver Naomi, lock the Kasbah gate, and deliver up to another the key that should serve as a signal for the beginning of the great night's work.

Also one difficulty attended it, for while Ali would be at the Kasbah there would be no one to bring up the Spaniards at the proper moment for the siege—no one in Tetuan on whom the strangers could rely not to lead them blindfold into a trap. To meet this difficulty Ali had gone in search of the Mahdi, revealed to him his plan, and asked him to help in the downfall of his master's enemies by leading the Spaniards at the right moment to the gates that should be thrown open to receive them.

Evening falls, and Ali proceeds to carry out his plans. He passes into the palace, finds Naomi, and leads her to the Mahdi. Then he joins the Spaniards, but forgets to lock the doors of the banqueting hall; and when the town gates open to the enemy,

news is carried to the palace and the guests scatter, most of them escaping. Ali, in his hatred, hunts the deserted palace for the Kaid, and in so doing meets with his death. The Kaid, having stayed behind to secure his money-bags, finds himself entrapped, and is stoned to death by the enraged townspeople.

Meanwhile the Mahdi has taken Naomi to her dying father; and over the deathbed of Israel they are betrothed. So ends *The Scapegoat*.

It will be seen that to carry out such a plot as this, with its almost miraculous crises, needs a high standard of literary skill. That the writer has succeeded there can be no doubt, for Naomi stands out, a creature of living flesh and blood, in whom nature and circumstance work to perfection through suffering. Israel's character is followed in its development, with convincing truth: the sudden rush of joy that elates the man, the reaction that depresses him, the acts of mercy that soften him—all lead irrevocably to the final scene of a soul reconciled to its

God. In this novel, as in all the best work of Mr Caine, the keynote is suffering, but suffering that of itself ennobles and purifies.

Whilst writing *The Scapegoat*, Mr Caine suffered severely from neurasthenia; his illness, of course, had effect upon his work, making it more sombre and gloomy than it might otherwise have been. When the work was published he received an urgent request from the Chief Rabbi asking him to visit Russia and write about the persecutions of the Jews in that country. He went in 1892, armed with signed documents from Lord Salisbury and the Chief Rabbi which were calculated to gain his admittance wherever he sought to go. The novelist was most warmly received wherever he went; but he was never able to make use of his experiences in the form of a novel. The subject, he felt, was altogether too vast for his experience: it would require years of study which he could not give. On his return to London, he lectured before the Jewish Workmen's Club in the

East End, "in a hall crammed to suffocation. I shall never forget that audience, the tears, the laughter, the applause, the wild embraces to which I was subjected by some of those poor exiles of humanity."

CHAPTER IX

THE MANXMAN

In *The Manxman*, Hall Caine sounds the depths of humanity, and brings up the cry of living men and women to our ears. The sacred powerfulness of Love is his theme, the depths of spiritual degradation in which Love, twisted, distorted, makes its own punishment—the ennobling beauty of carrying out its great Unselfishness in simple fearlessness. And this is shown in the three characters, Kate, Pete and Philip, which, as they develop, touch every chord of sympathy in the reader's gamut of sensibility.

Kate and Pete are children of one generation. Life is theirs and the light of the sun; yesterday has no hold over them, neither has to-morrow. Philip is the

aristocrat, knowing his fathers, and his fathers' father, heavy with the knowledge of their follies and sins; the world calls to him, for him there is a great To-morrow. Into the complexity of his nature comes love —love for a girl who is "of the people"— Kate; and the alternate yielding to and resisting his love makes the tragedy of the three lives.

The scene is laid entirely in the Isle of Man. Manx characteristics, humours, eccentricities and pathos making up the atmosphere so exclusively that when we are introduced for the moment to an assemblage chiefly English, we feel ourselves to be in a foreign element.

Philip Christian is brought up by his aunt, who in dread lest the principal weakness of their house should appear in him, makes it her task to keep in his remembrance the misery of his father's life, who, in marrying beneath him, ruined his career and lost his self-respect. We are carried through Philip's childhood with its love for little peasant Pete, until, with

Pete's child-sweetheart, Kate, the miller's daughter, the three stand together on the borderland of the mystery of manhood and womanhood. Then Pete, leaving Manxland to seek a fortune which shall make him acceptable in the eyes of Kate's parents, commits his sweetheart to Philip's care and toils his youth away in South Africa. Philip in his *rôle* of protector and letter-carrier, visits the inn of Sulby, Kate's home, now frequently, now infrequently, as his hidden love for Kate or the thought of treason to his friend surges uppermost. And Kate's child-love for Pete fades, passes into woman's passion for Philip. Understanding nothing of Philip's feelings, but knowing his love for her, and caring for nothing else, she rebels at his silence and sometimes consciously, sometimes unconsciously, uses all her power to tempt him to break it.

After the lapse of some months, in which Philip had not been seen at Sulby, she wrote him a letter. It was to say how anxious she had been at the length of time since she had last heard from Pete, and to ask if he

had any news to relieve her fears. The poor little lie was written in a trembling hand which shook honestly enough, but from the torment of other feelings.

Philip answered the letter in person. Something had been speaking to him day and night, like the humming of a top, finding him pretexts on which to go; but now he had to make excuses for staying so long away. It was evening. Kate was milking, and he went out to her in the cowhouse.

"We began to think we were to see no more of you," she said, over the rattle of the milk in the pail.

"I've—I've been ill," said Philip.

The rattle died to a thin hiss. "Very ill?" she asked.

"Well, no—not seriously," he answered.

"I never once thought of that," she said. "Something ought to have told me. I've been reproaching you, too."

Philip felt ashamed of his subterfuge, but yet more ashamed of the truth; so he leaned against the door and watched in silence. The smell of hay floated down from the loft, and the odour of the cow's breath came in gusts as she turned her face about. Kate sat on the milking-stool close by the ewer, and her head, on which she wore a sun-bonnet, she leaned against the cow's side.

"No news of Pete, then? No?" she said.

"No," said Philip.

Kate dug her head deeper in the cow, and muttered, "Dear Pete! So simple, so natural."

"He is," said Philip.

"So good-hearted, too."

"Yes."

"And such a manly fellow—any girl might like him," said Kate.

"Indeed, yes," said Philip.

There was silence again, and two pigs which had been snoring on the manure heap outside began to snort their way home. Kate turned her head so that the crown of the sun-bonnet was toward Philip, and said,—

"Oh, dear! Can there be anything so terrible as marrying somebody you don't care for?"

"Nothing so bad," said Philip.

The mouth of the sun-bonnet came round. "Yes, there's one thing worse, Philip."

"No?"

"Not having married somebody you do," said Kate, and the milk rattled like hail.

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Kate began to hate the very name of Pete. She grew angry with Philip also. Why couldn't he guess? Concealment was eating her heart out. The next time she saw Philip, he passed her in the market-place on the market-day, as she stood by the tipped-up gig, selling her butter. There was a chatter of girls all round as he bowed and went on. This vexed her, and she sold out at a penny a pound less, got the horse from the "Saddle," and drove home early.

On the way to Sulby she overtook Philip and drew up. He was walking to Kirk Michael to visit the old Deemster, who was ill. Would he not take a lift? He hesitated, half declined, and then got into the gig. As she settled herself comfortably after this change, he trod on the edge of her dress. At that he drew quickly away as if he had trodden on her foot.

She laughed, but she was vexed; and when he got down at "The Manx Fairy," saying he might call on his way back in the evening, she had no doubt Grannie would be glad to see him.

News comes of Pete's death, and Kate, knowing nothing of the world's share in Philip's heart, thinks the only barrier removed. And, for a few hot, passionate hours Philip does give way, only to be dragged back at the heels of his ambition, under the shield of Pete's home-coming and the falsity of the rumour of his death. He tells Kate that marriage with her would be treasonable to Pete, more than that, that neither he nor she can in honour marry either each other or anyone else. In her despair, Kate falls back upon stratagem. She sees Pete, allows herself to be considered his betrothed, and encourages rather than prevents the wedding preparations. Still Philip gives no sign, and Kate is married without fully realising what she is doing; but, on awakening to her new life, she sets herself the easy though bitter task of keeping Pete happy and

ignorant. Philip absents himself for some months, and then, returning to his native island and the career he had laid out for himself, becomes, on Pete's happy insistence, an occasional inmate of the latter's cottage. A child is born, and Kate finds it impossible to keep from Philip the knowledge that it is his. She tells him, and thence ensues the tragedy of Pete's life.

"You are right," he said, with his head bent down. "You cannot live here any longer. This life of deception must end."

"Then you will take me away, Philip?"

"I must, God forgive me, I must. I thought it would be sin. But *that* was long ago. It will be punishment. If I had known before—and I have been coming here time and again—looking on his happiness—but if I had once dreamt—and then only an hour ago—the oath at its baptism—O God!"

Her tears were flowing again, but a sort of serenity had fallen on her now.

"Forgive me," she whispered. "I tried to keep it to myself—"

"You could not keep it; you ought never to have kept it so long; the finger of God Himself ought to have burnt it out of you."

He spoke harshly, and she felt pain; but there was a secret joy as well.

"I am ruining you, Philip," she said, leaning over him.

'We are both drifting to ruin, Katherine," he answered hoarsely. He was an abandoned hulk, with anchorage gone and no hand at the helm—broken, blind, rolling to destruction.

"I can offer you nothing, Kate, nothing but a hidden life, a life in the dark. If you come to me you will leave a husband who worships you for one to whom your life can never be joined. You will exchange a life of respect by the side of a good man for a life of humiliation, a life of shame. How can it be otherwise now? It is too late, too late!"

Kate goes, and Pete crushes his grief to defend her honour. The lies he invents, that she has gone to visit his uncle in Liverpool, the letters he writes to himself, purporting to have come from her, the wiles he practises to deceive the neighbours—all intensify his terrible sorrow.

"A letter for you, Mr Quilliam."

Hearing these words, Pete, his eyes half shut as if dozing in the sunset, wakened himself with a look of astonishment.

"What? For me, is it? A letter, you say? Aw, I see," taking it and turning it in his hand, "just a line from the mistress, it's like. Well, well! A letter for me, if you plaze," and he laughed like a man much tickled.

He was in no hurry. He rammed his dead pipe with his finger, lit it again, sucked it, made it quack, drew a

long breath, and then said quietly, "Let's see what's her news at all."

He opened the letter leisurely, and read bits of it aloud, as if reading to himself, but holding the postman while he did so in idle talk on the other side of the gate. "And how are you living to-day, Mr Kelly? Aw, h'm—*getting that much better it's extraordinary*—Yes, a nice evenin', very, Mr Kelly, nice, nice—*that happy and comfortable and Uncle Joe is that good*—heavy bag at you to-night, you say? Aw, heavy, yes, heavy—*love to Grannie and all inquiring friends*—nothing, Mr Kelly, nothing—just a scribe of a line, thinking a man might be getting unaisy. She needn't, though—she needn't. But chut! It's nothing. Writing a letter is nothing to her at all. Why, she'd be knocking that off, bless you," holding out half a sheet of paper, "in less than an hour and a half. Truth enough, sir." Then, looking at the letter again, "What's this, though? *P.N.* They're always putting a P.N. at the bottom of a letter, Mr Kelly. *P.N.—I was expecting to be home before, but I wouldn't get away for Uncle Joe taking me to the theaytres.* Ha, ha, ha! A mighty boy is Uncle Joe. But, Mr Kelly, Mr Kelly," with a solemn look, "not a word of this to Cæsar!"

Pete must write back, and orthography not being his strong point, Philip must be his secretary.

"Then maybe you'll write me a letter?"

Philip nodded his head and returned, his mouth tightly closed, sat down at the table, and took up the pen.

"What is it?" he asked.

"Am I to give you the words, Phil? Yes? Well, if you won't be thinking mane—"

Pete charged his pipe out of his waistcoat pocket, and began to dictate: "Dear wife."

At that Philip gave an involuntary cry.

"Aw, best to begin proper, you know. 'Dear wife,'" said Pete again.

Philip made a call on his resolution, and put the words down. His hand felt cold; his heart felt frozen to the core. Pete lit up, and walked to and fro as he dictated his letter.

The letter is finished, and Philip in his misery returns to Kate, who persuades him to lead Pete to believe her dead. After doing this, Philip's moral degradation seems to be complete, and Kate, feeling herself to have been the cause of his ruin, leaves him. To outward appearance he climbs higher and higher in his professional career, while Pete sinks into poverty. Still the two men are friends. The child is ill; between them they nurse it, and Pete begins to see its resemblance to Philip. Little by little the truth comes to him—from the lips of a drunkard, he hears that Kate has been seen in London. Returning to his now poverty-

stricken cottage, he finds the wanderer bending over the cradle of her child. In his stupefaction he watches her as she leaves the house to end her misery, only to be rescued and brought face to face with Philip in his office of Dempster. Burning for vengeance, Pete seeks Philip—to meet him as he is borne home unconscious from the courthouse, and the sight wipes out all feelings but those of love and friendship in the great-hearted man. All his thought is for the happiness of Philip and Kate—to restore Philip to health, to resign Kate, to leave the island, after giving up the child that he has tended with so much love. And all that is best in Philip's nature rises, strengthened by its suffering. As the crown of his brilliant youth, he is offered the Governorship of the island; before the assembled court he refuses it, and quitting the post of honour to which he has already climbed, acknowledges Kate, setting out with her, there among the people that have known them from childhood, to build up a new life on the ruins of the old.

Although the story of *The Manxman* throbs with sadness, yet the unconscious humour of the minor characters, depicted as as they are with tender appreciation, gives to the book a completeness which is perhaps lacking in Hall Caine's earlier novels. The quaintnesses of Grannie, of Cæsar, of Pete himself, do much to sustain the spirit of optimism, that, rising triumphant in the end, gives to the story its undying beauty. To the hearts of all who read, the Manx people must come closer, the hope of all humanity shine brighter, because of the evident faithfulness of this picture of human life.

The first part of *The Manxman* was written in Greeba Castle, Isle of Man, where Mr Caine temporarily resided. He afterwards removed to Peel, and did not return to Greeba Castle until it was his own property.

In 1895 he visited America, where he was enthusiastically received. He was *fêted*, interviewed, bombarded at his hotel, and entertained almost to the point of extinction. It was said in one American journal that the American public had not been so deeply

interested by the visit of an English author since the visit of Dickens many years before. He always speaks of his visits to America with the deepest gratitude, for the distinguished attention and overflowing kindness always shown to him. There is no warmer admirer of America and American institutions.

His visit to America was undertaken on behalf of the Authors' Society, in connection with difficulties that had arisen with regard to Canadian copyright. His mission was highly successful, and on his return to the Isle of Man his greeting was as hearty as that which he had enjoyed in America. He received the following characteristic letter from "T. E. B."

"Here's a health to thee, Hall Caine! I suppose you are by this time in Peel, and this most interesting episode in your life attains its close.

"You must be fearfully tired, and I will not weary you with a long letter. I hope Mrs Caine has thoroughly enjoyed the busy, exciting weeks. What you both need now is REST. Take it, and plenty of it! Of course, I long to see you. But I can wait, and only write this to bid you a hearty welcome, and assure you of the great

happiness with which I have heard of your return.—
Ever yours, T. E. BROWN.

"RAMSEY, *December*, 13, '95."

This seems to me the fitting place in which to insert a hitherto unpublished article written by Mr Hall Caine on hearing of Mr Brown's death. Mr Caine was on his way to Rome when the news reached him that his friend had died suddenly at Clifton.

Three or four lines in a Paris newspaper, meagre in their details, full of errors, but nevertheless only too obviously authentic, bring me the saddest news that has come my way these many years. I ought to have been prepared for it by the long illness he passed through, by the manifest lessening of his vitality month by month, and even week by week, by the partial eclipse of certain faculties (such as memory) once so vigorous, and above all by his frequent and touching warnings. But the end has come upon me, at least, with startling, terrible and overwhelming suddenness, and it adds something to the pain of this first moment of grief that while the devoted friend and comrade of many years is being taken home I am myself far away from it, confined by a passing indisposition to a little room in a foreign city.

But the splendid soul who has gone from us will have troops of still older friends to stand about his grave. The Isle of Man will be in mourning now for one who loved her and her people with a love that was almost more deep and disinterested than that of any

other of her sons. This is no little thing to say, but there is no Manxman or Manxwoman who will question it. Without any material interest in the welfare and prosperity of his native land, with few (alas, how few!) intellectual associates there, parting from the friends and the ways of life when the burden of his work was done, he returned to the Isle of Man because he loved it, because his affections were wrapped up in it, because it was linked with the tenderest memories of childhood and the fondest recollections of youth, because the graves of his kindred were there, and he had heard the mysterious call that comes to a man's heart from the sire that gave him birth. Five years only were given him in which to indulge this love of home, but how much he got into them! How he spent himself for the people, without a thought of himself, without a suspicion of the difference between them. If only a handful of his countrymen called to him he came. He was at everybody's service, everybody's command. Distance was as nothing even to his failing strength, time was as nothing, labour was as nothing, and the penalties he paid he did not count.

The time has been when his friends have thought that the island did not appreciate all this, did not realise it to the full, did not rightly apprehend the sacrifices that were being made, or the generous disproportion of the man and the work, but there can be no question of that kind now. Manxmen and Manxwomen know to-day that the island has lost the greatest man who was ever born to it, the finest brain, the noblest heart, the grandest nature that we can yet call Manx! We do not point to his scholarship, though that was splendid, or to the place he won in life, though

it was high and distinguished, or yet to his books, though they were full of the fire of genius, racy of the soil he loved the best. None of these answers entirely to the idea we have of the man we knew and love so well. But the sparkling, brilliant soul, so tender, so strong, so humorous, so easily touched to sympathy, so gloriously gifted, this is the ideal that answers to our recollections of the first Manxman of this or any age.

When I pass from the island's loss to my own, I must be one of a little group who, though not within the circle of his family, can hardly trust themselves to speak. Sitting here, in this foreign city, while my countrymen, for all I know, are doing the last offices for the truest friend man ever had, I feel how much the island has lost for me in losing him. The little paragraph in *Le Figaro* fell on me this morning like a thundercloud from a cloudless sky, but more than once or twice or thrice during the past few months the thought has come over me of what the island would be without him. It came to me at the moment before I left home, and the last letter I wrote there was written to him, saying Good-bye and God bless you, and such other words of farewell as one sends to one's friend on the eve of a long journey. But he has taken the longer journey of the two, and when the time comes to return home and I see our beautiful mountains from the sea, I don't know what it will be to remember he is there no longer. During the past ten years I have leaned on him as on an elder brother, a wiser, stronger, purer, serener nature, on whom I could rely for solace and counsel and support. I did nothing without consulting him, and took no serious step without his sanction. My stories were told to him first, and he knew all my plans and intentions.

If I have done anything that deserves to be remembered it is only myself that can know how much that is good in it is but a reflection from the light of his genius. He was the ablest appreciator, the most enthusiastic admirer, and the most inspiring of critics. To my moods of depression he brought the buoyancy of hope, to my weakness of heart the strength of his spirit, sustaining me amid the despondency of failure, and the no less real penalties of success. It was a familiar thought to me at Greeba that I could take the train to Ramsey four or five times a day, and within an hour I could be with him. And now he is gone, and I can go to him no more.

Mr Caine received the following letter from the late W. E. Gladstone shortly after the publication of *The Manxman.*

"Dollis Hill, N.W.,
"*July* 18, 1894.

"My Dear Sir,—I thank you very much for the gift of your work and I hope the time will not be long before the condition of my eyes will permit me to peruse it.

"It is very pleasant to me to find that you have again applied your great talents to illustrating the history and character of that interesting people the Manxmen.—I remain, my dear sir, faithfully yours,

"W. E. Gladstone."

He followed this letter up by another, written on December 4, 1894, from

Hawarden Castle, Chester, in which he says: "Though I am no believer in divorce, I have read your *Manxman* with great admiration of the power which gives such true life to Manx character and tradition."

CHAPTER X

THE CHRISTIAN

With the publication of *The Christian* began a new episode in Hall Caine's career. Hitherto he had been welcomed on all sides; praise was literally heaped upon him. The critics had repeated these eulogies each time a new book of Hall Caine's was put into their hands. First, *The Deemtser;* next *The Bondman;* then *The Scapegoat.* But *The Christian* changed all this. The critics had grown tired of praise. Besides, Mr Caine had dared to criticise the hypocrisies of modern society. So the critics turned about, and flatly contradicted nearly everything they had said before. One pointed out that Mr Caine had described a certain garment as red, instead of, say, green; another was highly indignant because he chose to think the novelist had said a deacon could be made

bishop without passing through the intermediate state of priesthood; and another cried out because the character of a purely fictitious nurse was described as being not particularly moral. I have far more respect for the reviewer of books than the average literary person has, but I must confess his methods are sometimes inexplicable. This change of attitude, amusing as it was in many ways, must have been a matter of some surprise to Mr Caine. But there were explanations—the novelist had deserted the Isle of Man and come to London; he had brought Glory Quayle, fearless, healthy, beautiful, ambitious, from Manxland and put her down in a London hospital. By contact with the metropolis she is, in many ways, spoiled—vulgarised. And not only that: London was shown as a terrible place, the rich trampling on the poor, the immoral living on the moral, and the strong placing their feet on the necks of the weak. This fearless attack of Mr Caine's was the chief cause of the change of attitude of the critics. He had stated his case, and in the opinion

of his admirers proved it up to the hilt; and certain of the reviewers, imagining that the cap was made for them, wore it, at the same time declaring that it was ten sizes too large.

Glory Quayle has not been long in London when she is taken to the theatre by her friends Drake and Lord Robert Ure. The play was *Much Ado About Nothing*, and the actors Henry Irving and Ellen Terry. It is Glory's first visit to the theatre, and her imagination runs riot in utter bewilderment.

But the fourth act witnessed Glory's final vanquishment. When she found the scene was the inside of a church, and they were to be present at a wedding, she could not keep still on her seat for delight; but when the marriage was stopped, and Claudio uttered his denunciation of Hero, she said it was just like him, and it would serve him right if nobody believed him.

"Hush!" said somebody near them.

"But they *are* believing him," said Glory, quite audibly.

"Hush! hush!" came from many parts of the theatre.

"Well, that's shameful—her father, too—" began Glory.

"Hush, Glory!" whispered Drake; but she had risen to her feet, and when Hero fainted and fell she uttered a cry.

"What a girl!" whispered Polly. "Sit down—everybody's looking!"

"It's only a play, you know," whispered Drake; and Glory sat down and said,—

"Well, yes, of course, it's only a play. Did you suppose—"

But she was lost in a moment. Beatrice and Benedick were alone in the church now; and when Beatrice said, "Kill Claudio," Glory leapt up again and clapped her hands. But Benedick would not kill Claudio, and it was the last straw of all. That wasn't what she called being a great actor, and it was shameful to sit and listen to such plays. Lots of disgraceful scenes happened in life, but people didn't come to the theatre to see such things, and she would go.

"How ridiculous you are!" said Polly; but Glory was out in the corridor, and Drake was going after her.

She came back at the beginning of the fifth act with red eyes and confused smiles, looking very much ashamed. From that moment onward she cried a good deal, but gave no other sign until the green curtain came down at the end, when she said,—

"It's a wonderful thing! To make people forget it's not true is the most wonderful thing in the world!"

But Drake and Lord Robert are merely friends; it is the Reverend John Storm whom she loves. He has "a well-formed nose, a powerful chin, and full lips. . . . His complexion is dark, almost swarthy, and there is a certain look of the gipsy in his big golden-

brown eyes with their long black lashes." Her love is returned, but he has forsworn the world, and she is longing to become an actress, to have the world at her feet, applauding her, and showering on her all the praise and glory at their command. Which is it to be?—Love without the World?—or the World without Love? She cannot decide. Meanwhile she has left the hospital, and John Storm has entered a Brotherhood in the heart of London, and taken the necessary vows. Meanwhile, Glory is passing through strange vicissitudes, keeping body and soul together by different occupations, serving in a tobacconist's shop, and selling programmes at a theatre. But she writes cheery letters to the old people at home in the Isle of Man, making them believe that she is happy and well, and that the world is a very beautiful place to live in. Here is one of her letters:—

"But it isn't nonsense, my dear grandfather, and I really have left the hospital. I don't know if it was the holiday and the liberty or what, but I felt like that young hawk at Glenfaba—do you remember it?—the one that

was partly snared, and came dragging the trap on to the lawn by a string caught round its leg. I had to cut it away—I had to, I had to! But you mustn't feel one single moment's uneasiness about me. An able-bodied woman like Glory Quayle doesn't starve in a place like London. Besides, I am provided for already, so you see my bow abides in strength. . . . You mustn't pay too much attention to my lamentations about being compelled by Nature to wear a petticoat. Things being so arranged in this world, I'll make them do. But it does make one's head swim and one's wings droop to see how hard Nature is on a woman compared to a man. Unless she is a genius or a jellyfish, there seems to be only one career open to her, and that is a lottery, with marriage for the prizes, and for the blanks—oh dear, oh dear! Not that I have anything to complain of, and I hate to be so sensitive. Life is wonderfully interesting, and the world is such an amusing place that I have no patience with people who run away from it, and if I were a man. . . . But wait, only wait, good people."

This is but one out of many delicious letters that Glory writes to her grandfather and aunts. Meanwhile she makes a beginning, singing at a music-hall, and then in society drawing-rooms. But she is rarely happy; she is hampered by being only a woman. Difficulties are placed in her way, and vice lurks at every unsuspected corner waiting to pounce out upon her. But eventu-

ally she succeeds. She becomes a famous music-hall star, and John Storm has left the monastery. He is consumed with love for Glory—and she, she cannot give up the world she is just beginning to conquer. He visits the music-hall at which she is performing, and a day or two after he visits Glory.

"Glory," he said, "if you are ashamed of this life, believe me it is not a right one."

"Ashamed? Why should I be ashamed? Everybody is saying how proud I should be."

She spoke feverishly, and by a sudden impulse she plucked up the paper, but as suddenly let it drop again, for, looking at his grave face, her little fame seemed to shrivel up. "But give a dog a bad name, you know. . . . You were there on Monday night. Did you see anything, now—anything in the performance—"

"I saw the audience, Glory; that was enough for me. It is impossible for a girl to live long in an atmosphere like that and be a good woman. Yes, my child, impossible! God forbid that I should sit in judgment on any man, still less on any woman; but the women of the music-hall, do they *remain* good women? Poor souls! they are placed in a position so false that it would require extraordinary virtue not to become false along with it! And the whiter the soul that is dragged through that—that mire, the more the defilement. The audiences at such places don't want the white soul, they don't want the good woman; they want the woman who has tasted of the tree of good and evil. You can

see it in their faces, and hear it in their laughter, and measure it in their applause. Oh, I'm only a priest, but I've seen these places all the world over, and I know what I'm saying, and I know it's true, and you know it's true, Glory—"

Glory leapt up from the table, and her eyes seemed to emit fire. "I know it's hard and cruel and pitiless, and since you were there on Monday, and saw how kind the audience was to *me*, it's personal and untrue as well."

But her voice broke, and she sat down again, and said in another tone, "But, John, it's nearly a year, you know, since we saw each other last, and isn't it a pity? Tell me, where are you living now? Have you made your plans for the future? . . ."

But it is of no use. Glory cannot give up her nights of applause; her increasing fame is the very breath of her nostrils, and though love calls in a clear, compelling voice, yet she pays it no heed, but devotes all her energy to her profession, and so the tale progresses. In the course of time, John Storm goes to live in the heart of the slums, to work among the poorest of the poor. His mind and soul are in his work, but his heart is ever with Glory. She becomes more and more successful, and once, on a visit to the races, she meets John Storm. She is driving with friends, he walking by the roadside. She is flushed with

joy—radiant with happiness, but he is torn and bleeding with love. His Glory is in danger; success and love of the world are destroying her soul. What can he do to save her? Nothing, nothing! Yes, but there is one thing he can do. He imagines himself called by God to kill her, for only by that means can her soul be saved from everlasting damnation.

She laughed, though there was nothing to laugh at, and down at the bottom of her heart she was afraid. But she began moving about, trying to make herself easy, and pretending not to be alarmed.

"Well, won't you help me off with my cloak? No? Then I must do it for myself, I suppose."

Throwing off her outer things, she walked across the room and sat down on the sofa near to where he stood.

"How tired I am! It's been such a day! Once is enough for that sort of thing, though. Now, where do you think I've been?"

"I know where you've been, Glory — I saw you there."

"You? Really? Then, perhaps, it *was* you who. . . . Was it you in the hollow?"

"Yes."

He had moved to avoid contact with her. . . . Then the wave of tenderness came sweeping over him again, and he felt as if the ground were slipping beneath his feet.

"Will you say your prayers to-night, Glory?" he said.

"Why not?" she answered, trying to laugh.

"Then why not say them now, my child?"

"But why?"

He had made her tremble all over; but she got up, walked straight across to him, looked intently into his face a moment, and then said, "What is the matter? Why are you so pale? You are not well, John!"

"No; I am not well either," he answered.

"John, John, what does it all mean? What are you thinking of? Why have you come here to-night?"

"To save your soul, my child. It is in great, great peril. . . ."

"Am I, then, so very wicked? Surely heaven doesn't want me yet, John. Some day, I trust . . . I hope—"

"To-night, to-night, *now!*"

Then her cheeks turned pale and her lips became white and bloodless.

Trembling from head to foot, she stepped up to him again, and began softly and sweetly, trying to explain herself. "John, dear John, if you see me with certain people and in certain places, you must not think from that—"

But he broke in upon her with a torrent of words. . . . Out of a dry and husky throat John Storm answered, "I would rather die a thousand, thousand deaths than touch a hair of your head, Glory. . . . But God's will is His will," he added, quivering and trembling.

"We are of different natures, John, that is the real trouble between us now, and always has been. But, whether we like it or not, our lives are wrapped up together for all that. We can't do without each other. God makes men and women like that sometimes."

There was a piteous smile on his face. "I never

doubted your feeling for me, Glory—no, not even when you hurt me most."

"And if God makes us so—"

"I shall never forgive myself, Glory, though heaven itself forgives me!"

"If God makes us love each other in spite of every barrier that divides us—"

"I shall never know another happy hour in this life, Glory, never!"

"Then why should we struggle? It is our fate, and we cannot conquer it. You can't give up your life, John, and I can't give up mine, but our hearts are one."

Her voice sang like music in his ears. . . . She was fighting for her life. He started to his feet and came to her with his teeth set and his pupils fixed. "This is only the devil tempting me. Say your prayers, child!"

He grasped her left hand with his right. His grip almost overtaxed her strength and she felt faint. In an explosion of emotion the insane frenzy for destroying had come upon him again. He longed to give his feeling physical expression.

"Say them, say them!" he cried. "God sent me to kill you, Glory."

A sensation of terror and of triumph came over her at once. She half closed her eyes and threw her other arm around his neck. "No, but to love me. . . . Kiss me, John."

Then a cry came from him like that of a man flinging himself over a precipice. He threw his arms about her, and her disordered hair fell over his face.

But these two unhappy lovers are only

married when John is on his deathbed. He is fatally injured in a riot, and though "they could not come together in this world," yet they are "united for all eternity on the threshold of the next." So ends one of the most enthralling of Hall Caine's books—a book that will be read as long as men and women care to hear about the love of a noble-hearted, fearless woman for a pure and high-minded man.

CHAPTER XI

THE ETERNAL CITY

THIS last great novel of Hall Caine's is not a picture of Life; it *is* Life. His characters are more real than those with whom we meet and talk to every day of our lives; for not only do we hear them speak, but we see into the thoughts of their hearts, and sometimes catch a glimpse of their very souls. It may be urged that real men and women are not so passionately pure and self-sacrificing as David Rossi and Roma, but they who speak thus forget that the world has produced as many saints, martyrs and heroes, as blackguards and criminals. David Rossi is a hero for the sake of his country, for the sake of the poor and oppressed; Roma, purified, ennobled, and uplifted by

Love, is a martyr for the sake of her betrothed. They are as passionate as Romeo and Juliet, Paolo and Francesca; and as pure as Dante and Beatrice.

The *mise-en-scène* of the story is, of course, Rome — Rome with its grandeur side by side with its misery; its ambitious men and fallen women; its Vatican, its theatres, its ruins and its shame. The time is the first months of the present century. The City is made to live; we breathe its air and walk its streets. David Rossi is a member of the Chamber of Deputies, a friend of the people, a conspirator, a hero; all his actions are for the material and spiritual elevation of the downtrodden and oppressed, and this book is the story of the martyrdom he has to undergo, and of his eventual success. This is his charter, a framed manuscript copy of which he keeps hanging by his bedside:—

"*From what am I called?*

From the love of riches, from the love of

honour, from the love of home, and from the love of woman.

To what am I called?

To poverty, to purity, to obedience, to the worship of God, and to the service of humanity.

Why am I called?

Because it has pleased the Almighty to make me friendless, homeless, a wanderer, an exile, without father or mother, sister or brother, kith or kin.

Hoping my heart deceives me not, with fear and trembling I sign my unworthy name.

D. L.—LONDON."

Roma is the ward of Count Bonelli, the young King's Prime Minister; she is a beautiful, high-spirited, noble-hearted woman, who has little or no memory of either father or mother. She lives a life of extravagant luxury—happy, thoughtless and

frivolous, but always kind and generous. Still, her soul is asleep; she has never realised that Life is a serious matter, not to be trifled with or neglected. But when she meets David Rossi all is changed. She has called at his rooms with the idea of laying him in the dust. Ignorantly, and in the heat of the moment, he has publicly defamed her character, and she is intent on revenge.

"If I were a man, I suppose I should challenge you. Being a woman I can only come to you and tell you that you are wrong."

"Wrong?"

"Cruelly, terribly, shamefully wrong."

"You mean to tell me. . . ."

He was stammering in a husky voice, but she said quite calmly:

"I mean to tell you that in substance and in fact what you implied was false."

There was a dry glitter of hatred and repulsion in her eyes which she tried to subdue, for she knew that he was looking at her still.

"If . . . if you give me your solemn word of honour that what I said—what I implied—was false, that rumour and report have slandered you, that it is all a cruel and baseless calumny. . . ."

She raised her head, looked him full in the face, and without a quiver in her voice:

"I *do* give it," she said.

"Then I believe you," he answered. "With all my heart and soul I believe you. . . ."

"This man is a child," she thought. "He will believe anything I tell him."

Soon, however, she has to acknowlege that no matter how childlike he may be, he is never for one moment childish; he gives her proof of his strength, his devotion, his manly purity.

"I wished to meet you face to face, but now that I have met you, you are not the man I thought you were."

"Nor you," he said, "the woman I pictured you."

A light came into her eyes at that, and she looked up and said:

"Then you had never seen me before?"

And he answered after a moment:

"I had never seen Donna Roma Volonna until to-day."

"Forgive me for coming to you," she said.

"I thank you for doing so," he replied, "and if I have sinned against you, from this hour onward I am your friend and champion. Let me try to right the wrong I have done you. I am ready to do it if I can, no matter at what self-abasement. I am eager to do it, and I shall never forgive myself until it is done. What I said was the result of a mistake—let me ask your forgiveness."

"You mean publicly."

"Yes! At ten o'clock they send for my article for the morning's paper. To-morrow morning I will beg your pardon in public for the public insult I have offered you."

"You are very good, very brave," she said; "but no, I will not ask you to do that."

"Ah! I understand. I know it is impossible to overtake a lie. Once started it goes on and on, like a stone rolling down-hill, and even the man who started can never stop it. Tell me what better can I do—tell me, tell me."

Her face was still down, but it had now a new expression of joy.

"There is one thing you can do, but it is difficult."

"No matter! Tell me what it is."

"I thought when I came here . . . but it is no matter."

"Tell me, I beg of you."

He was trying to look into her face again, and she was eluding his gaze as before, but now for another, a sweeter reason.

"I thought if—if you would come to my house when my friends are there, your presence as my guest, in the midst of those in whose eyes you have injured me, might be sufficient of itself to wipe out everything. But . . ."

She waited for his answer with a beating heart, but at first he did not speak, and pretending to put away the idea, she said:

"But that is impossible: I cannot ask it. I know what it would mean. Such people are pitiless—they have no mercy."

"Is that *all?*" he said.

"Then you are not afraid?"

"Afraid!"

For one moment they looked at each other, and their eyes were shining. She was proud of his power. This was no child after all, but a man; one who, for a woman's sake, could stand up against all the world.

"I have thought of something else," she said.

"What is it?"

"You have heard that I am a sculptor. I am making a fountain for the municipality, and if I might carve your face into it. . . ."

"It would be coals of fire on my head."

"You would need to sit to me."

"When shall it be?"

"To-morrow morning to begin with, if that is not too soon."

"It will be years on years till then," he said.

Her idea of revenge is entirely gone; she is at his feet, loving him, and aching to be loved in return. But he remembers his work: he must not allow worldly matters to interfere with its progress. So he will not see Roma again. Love is not for him; would that it were! And then follows a series of delightful letters: on his part serious, kind, and imbued with a high sense of duty; on her part, humorous, light, wistful, and sometimes sad. He tells her that he is in love, the object of his affections being a lady of beauty, wealth and virtue. The lady is herself, but the language is veiled, and at first she hardly guesses his meaning.

"My Dear, Dear Friend,—It's all up! I'm done with her! My unknown and invisible sister that is to be, or rather that isn't to be and oughtn't to be, is not worth thinking about any longer. You tell me that she is good and brave, and noble-hearted, and yet you would have me believe that she loves wealth, and ease, and luxury, and that she could not give them up even for the sweetest thing that ever comes into a woman's life. Out on her! What does she think a wife is? A pet to be pampered, a doll to be dressed up and danced on your knee? If that's the sort of woman she is, I know what I should call her. A name is on the tip of my tongue, and the point of my finger, and the end of my pen, and I'm itching to have it out, but I suppose I must not write it. Only don't talk to me any more about the bravery of a woman like that.

"The wife I call brave is a man's friend, and if she knows what that means, to be the friend of her husband to all the limitless lengths of friendship, she thinks nothing about sacrifices between him and her, and differences of class do not exist for either of them. Her pride died the instant love looked out of her eyes at him, and if people taunt her with his poverty, or his birth, she answers and says, 'It's true he is poor, but his glory is that he was a workhouse boy who hadn't father or mother to care for him, and now he is a great man, and I'm proud of him, and not all the wealth of the world shall take me away.'"

Eventually their love is confessed, and Baron Bonelli learns the truth. He sets to work immediately to compass the ruin or

death of Rossi, and jealousy lives in his heart every minute of the day, and all the night through. It is true he is married, but his wife is a maniac, and he expects to hear of her death at any time. It becomes necessary for Rossi to leave Rome: he is surrounded by a host of enemies ready at any moment to clap him into prison. So he says "Good-bye" to Roma, but before he leaves they are "religiously" married—that is to say, they take part in a ceremony recognised by the Church as a substitute for the marriage service proper, but which the State refuses to acknowledge. But they are man and wife for all that, and the thought sustains them through all the trouble they have to undergo. The moment the ceremony is over he leaves her, and she is alone to face the cunning and duplicity of Baron Bonelli.

"That you should change your plans so entirely, and setting out a month ago to . . . to . . . shall I say betray . . . this man Rossi, you are now striving to save him, is a problem which admits of only one explanation, and that is that . . . that you . . ."

"That I love him—yes, that's the truth," said Roma

boldly, but flushing up to the eyes and trembling with fear.

There was a death-like pause in the duel. Both dropped their heads, and the silent face in the bust seemed to be looking down on them. Then the Baron's icy cheeks quivered visibly, and he said in a low, hoarse voice:

"I'm sorry! Very sorry! For in that case I may be compelled to justify your conclusion that a Minister has no humanity and no pity. It may even be necessary to play the part of the husband in the cruel story of the lover's heart. If David Rossi cannot be arrested by the authorisation of Parliament, he must be arrested when Parliament is not in session, and then his identity will have to be established in a public tribunal. In that event you will be forced to appear, and having refused to make a private statement in the secrecy of a magistrate's office, you will be compelled to testify in the Court of Assize."

"Ah, but you can't make me do that!" cried Roma excitedly, as if seized by a sudden thought.

"Why not?"

"Never mind why not. That's my secret. You can't do it, I tell you," she cried excitedly.

He looked at her as if trying to penetrate her meaning, and then said:

"We shall see."

And, indeed, Roma is not so secure as she imagines. She is relying on the fact that, according to the law of nearly every civilised nation, a wife is not permitted to

give evidence against her husband. The Baron is ignorant that Rossi and she are man and wife. But alas! she is not Rossi's wife, not even according to the rules of the Church. She has not been baptised, and an unbaptised woman cannot be a daughter of the Church, and a woman who is not a daughter of the Church cannot claim the Church's privileges.

Meanwhile Rossi is in London, Paris, Berlin, Geneva, addressing meetings, and organising a tremendous demonstration which is to take place in Rome. But his letters are necessarily vague—mere hints of what is about to come to pass; and gradually the thought grows in Roma's mind that the secret work upon which he is engaged in is nothing more or less than a conspiracy to take the King's life. Terror seizes hold on her and she knows not what to do. And all the time she is pursued by a terrible remorse: she has never told Rossi of the one dark stain on her life. She has never told him that, against her will, Baron Bonelli seduced her, and that she still remained his

friend. That brief, terrible hour has tormented her soul with the torments of hell. Ought she to tell the man she thinks is her husband? She cannot answer this question, so she confesses, and the priest refers her to the Pope himself. And then in an extraordinarily vivid and beautiful scene the Pope urges her to confess everything to Rossi; but this she has already done. However, her husband has not replied. The letters she has written have miscarried, but she imagines that her confession has killed his love, or roused his anger. The plot is too intricate and delicately handled at this point to be related in detail without great risk of damaging its interest and spoiling its effect; suffice it to say that, acting on the purest and most generous motives, but deceived by circumstance, Roma betrays her husband, and he is captured by the police when he is on his way home to peace and happiness. He escapes, seeks out Roma, and confronts her with her perfidy. She admits it, but says she can explain all. In the midst of her wild, vehement talking, Baron Bonelli

enters from an inner room. A fight ensues between Rossi and the Baron. The latter is mortally wounded, and Roma is left alone to wait on him—her bitterest enemy—in his dying hour. This is, perhaps, the most powerful scene in the book; it is certain it is the most dramatic. But it would be an invidious task to select one particular scene as being more skilful and effective than any other, when there are so many supremely skilful and effective scenes.

The rest of the story is of breathless interest. Roma is found with the body of the dead Baron, is accused of murder, and pleads guilty. She receives her sentence of imprisonment quite calmly, happy in the thought that in sacrificing herself she is helping on the cause of her husband, and suffering in his stead. Meanwhile David Rossi, on the point of suicide, and suffering a thousand torments through what seems to him to be Roma's treachery, seeks sanctuary at the Vatican. The Pope receives him and grants him what he asks. Too bewildered by the stress of recent

events to think, he does not realise Roma's danger; it never occurs to him that she may be seized upon as Bonelli's murderer. But soon it reaches the ears of the Pope that Rossi is the guilty one, and not Roma, and on David asking for an interview the following scene takes place:—

"Holy Father, I wished to speak to you."

"What about, my son?"

"Myself. Now I see that I did wrong to ask for your protection. You thought I was innocent, and there was something I did not tell you. When I said I was guilty before God and man, you did not understand what I meant. Holy Father, I meant that I had committed murder. . . ."

The Pope looked at the young face, cut deep with lines of despair, and his heart yearned over it.

"Sit down, my son. Let us think. Though you did not tell me of the assassination, I soon knew all about it. . . . Partly in self-defence, you say?"

"That is so, but I do not urge it as an excuse. And if I did, who else knows anything about it?"

"Is there nobody who knows?"

"One, perhaps. But it is my wife, and she could have no interest in saving me now, even if I wanted to be saved. . . . I have read her letters."

"If I were to tell you it is not so, my son—that your wife is still ready to sacrifice herself for your safety. . . ."

"But that is impossible, your Holiness. There are so many things you do not know."

"If I were to tell you I have just seen her, and, notwithstanding your want of faith in her, she has still faith in you. . . ."

The deep lines of despair began to pass from Ross's face, and he made a cry of joy.

"If I were to say that she loves you, and would give her life for you. . . ."

"Is it possible? Do you tell me that? In spite of everything? And she—where is she? Let me go to her. Holy Father, if you only knew! I'll go and beg her pardon. I cursed her! Yes, it is true that in my blind, mad passion, I . . . But let me go back to her on my knees. . . ."

"Stay, my son. You shall see her presently."

"Can it be possible that I shall see her? . . . Is she at home still?"

"She is only a few paces from this place, my son."

"Only a few paces! Oh, let me not lose a moment more. Where is she?"

"In the Castle of St Angelo," said the Pope.

A dark cloud crossed Rossi's beaming face and his mouth opened as if to emit a startled cry.

"In . . . in prison?"

The Pope bowed.

"What for?"

"The assassination of the Minister."

"Roma? . . . But what a fool I was not to think of it as a thing that might happen! I left her with the dead man. Who was to believe her when she denied that she had killed him?"

"She did not deny it. She avowed it."

"Avowed it? She said that she had . . ."

The Pope bowed again.

"Then . . . then it was . . . Was it to shield me?"
"Yes."
Rossi's eyes grew moist. He was like another man.

The close of the story is deeply pathetic. David rushes off to save her, and gives himself up in her place. But Parliament acquits him of all guilt, and he is once more a free man. Roma is seized by some terrible internal disease, and it is only a matter of a few weeks before she is overtaken by death. Her last hours are spent with David by her side in peace, quietness and gladness.

I have given but the barest outline of the plot, for it hinges more on the conflict of one character against another, than on the intricacies of coincidence and unlooked-for event, and many of the phases of modern thought and feeling indicated in the different characters are of too subtle and delicate a nature to be dealt with in a short notice. This much may be said: it is a book that should be read. No one can afford to pass it over. It contains some of the

most descriptive and dramatic writing of our time, and, quite apart from its literary value, will go down to posterity as one of the most popular achievements of the twentieth century. All careful readers must admit that this is the strongest, the most mature, and yet the most daring novel that Hall Caine has yet written. The strongest, because not only does it deal with individuals, but also with masses of men representing the most conflicting thoughts, feelings and passions of the present day; the most mature, because it contains the expression of his thought on subjects which have compelled his study for more than thirty years; and the most daring, because it introduces the Pope and the Prime Minister of Italy as central characters with complete and indisputable success.

I venture to quote two paragraphs from the *Bookman* (August 1901) which give, so it seems to me, an extremely lucid account of how Mr Caine fixed on Rome as the scene for his latest story.

"When Mr Hall Caine first decided upon the central idea, he had thought of setting his story in London, or Paris, or New York. He tried all cities and found them impossible. The civil and social conception which is behind the story has its rightful home in the Third Italy. To Mr Hall Caine Rome is typical of the new democracy. According to his observation, the force which in the past century has most vigorously asserted itself is the power of the peoples, wide, liberal, and democratic in contrast with the absolute power of the kings. But over the new power which has destroyed the reality of absolutism, continues the pomp and ostentation of the old rule of things, and not only continues, but daily attempts to gain a new vigour, a resurrection by three systems, in which Mr Hall Caine recognises the re-incarnation of the Philistine against the modern Samson, who stands for the rights of the peoples—imperialism, militarism, and the question of temporal power.

"Rome is the metropolis of the Christian world, not only by reason of its religious connections, but also by reason of its geographical position, its history, its glorious traditions, the fascination of its art, and the mystery of its eternal life which pervades and surrounds it. Rome alone seems to Mr Hall Caine the city worthy, in the dawn of an immense social revolution, to be the heart and soul of humanity, renewing itself in hopes and aspirations now, and promising in the future pacific civil and moral glory."

Whether or not Mr Caine is right in his supposition that a tremendous social upheaval in Europe is imminent, it is not for me to say; but it is certain that his picture of the working of the antagonistic social forces of the present day in Rome is a truthful one, and that the feverish unrest and disorder of the people has not been brought about by the Italian Government only, but by the Church itself.

The Eternal City is not only a history: it is a prophecy also. It contains a solemn

warning, and states the case of the people with unparalleled insight and sympathy. If the next few years do not witness a mighty change in the mode of Government of the peoples of Europe, it will be because some tremendous outside force, which has not yet been reckoned with, has intervened, and changed the current of social and international politics.

In looking at Mr Hall Caine's future it is impossible to see with any certainty what he is likely to achieve. A novelist he is, and a novelist he will always remain, for he is a born writer, and could not separate himself from his work even if he desired to do so. Besides, he has a world-wide public to address—a public that increases in large numbers year by year—and to sacrifice an audience of millions of human beings would be the very height of folly. And there can be no manner of doubt that he realises that the written word has immeasurably greater power than that which is merely spoken. The responsibility of

his position often weighs heavily upon him, for he feels that his power over the destinies of those who love his works is almost illimitable, and a single false step might mean ruin to the lives of hundreds of his fellow-creatures. Yet, in his later works, I see a desire on his part to enter more closely into the lives of the masses: he seems to be obsessed by the ambition to make easier the lives of the ignorant and uneducated, and to be anxious to reach those into whose hands a book of his can never fall. I have very good reason to suppose that he contemplates entering public life as a politician or as a lecturer on social reform—but a career of that kind would mean sacrificing an audience of millions that he reaches by his novels, for an audience that could certainly be estimated in thousands. But still there are many whom he wishes to aid who are, in the present condition of things, beyond his reach; how to bring himself in touch with this section of humanity, he cannot yet perceive, but I have no doubt that in the

course of time he will find a way out of the difficulty.

This gradual dawning of sympathy on the part of Hall Caine with the suffering and oppressed is one of the most interesting features in the study of his life and work. That he has always sympathised with the poor and ignorant we have ample evidence in the account of the Reverend William Pierce of his early life in Liverpool; but this sympathy did not begin to evince itself in his work until *The Deemster* was published, where in parts it was clearly seen that the lower classes were gaining a strong hold upon his heart and imagination. *The Christian* eventually showed the depth of this sympathy, and in what way he thought it advisable to put it into practical form.

From time to time it has been rumoured that Mr Caine has the intention of dealing with the drink question in a novel; but I am able to state that, though he has been and is profoundly moved by the misery and shame which are caused by the too free use of

alcohol, yet he has been unable to see his way to treat it in a work of fiction. It is true, the subject has engaged his attention for some considerable time, and on my last visit to him he spoke long and earnestly on this question. Whatever he may decide to do in the future, it is certain that for the next two or three years he will be occupied with another Manx novel. He has thought of making the recent Bank failure the subject of his work, but before he decides definitely he is to take a long rest. Each fresh novel he writes drains away his strength, for to him writing means a constant struggle, a bitter emotional experience which almost prostrates him. Of late he has also been turning his attention to the *Life of Christ*, which he wrote some years ago, but which has never yet been published in spite of the many tempting offers which he has received for the copyright. It has not been my privilege to read this book, but I may say that Mr Caine believes it to contain some of his best work. Speaking

of the year 1890, he says: "I had read Rénan's *Life of Christ*, and had been deeply impressed by it, and I had said that there was a splendid chance for a life of Christ as vivid and as personal (if that were possible) from the point of belief as Rénan's was from the point of unbelief." It is perhaps unnecessary to point out that such a work from the pen of Mr Caine would be of absorbing interest to all his readers, and it is to be hoped that he will be prevailed upon to give it to the world.

And now I come to the end of my work. I have attempted no comparison between him and his contemporaries, for his place in the literature of England must be left for future generations to decide. Suffice it to say, that it seems to me he must be placed in the very front rank of all novelists, living or dead; for in few writers do I see such sympathy, such depth of knowledge of human nature, such insight, such power, and such discrimination as I see in the work of Hall

Caine. However this may be, it is certain that no novelist—of this or past generations—has so profoundly stirred the masses of England and America as Hall Caine has done. He has influenced his own generation to a greater extent than can possibly be estimated; that his influence has been of an ennobling, purifying nature few will deny, and those who find evil in his books must look into their own hearts and cast out the wickedness that they find there. "To the pure all things are pure"; well, not quite all, but one cannot help suspecting that those who have such keen noses for scenting evil odours are not themselves so free from corruption as they would have us believe.

THE END

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